A

SUMMARY VIEW

OF THE

MILLENNIAL CHURCH,

OR

UNITED SOCIETY OF BELIEVERS,

(COMMONLY CALLED SHAKERS.)

COMPRISING

THE RISE, PROGRESS AND PRACTICAL ORDER OF THE SOCIETY;

TOGETHER WITH

THE GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF THEIR FAITH AND TESTIMONY.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE MINISTRY,
IN UNION WITH THE CHURCH.

In the days of these kings shall the God of Heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. DANIEL.

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Theolo brary
SCHOOL C EOLOGY
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California

PREFACE.

The increasing attention which, within a few years, has been directed to the principles and practice of the people called *Shakers*, by travellers and writers of various classes and descriptions, has occasioned much enquiry among almost all classes of people. Publications have been issued from the press in almost every form. Historians of the various denominations of religion, writers of travels, compilers of Geographies and Gazetteers, the editors of periodical essays, and the publishers of common newspapers, have all in their turns, thought proper to notice, in some way or other, the people so much "wondered at." But in consequence of the various and contradictory accounts of many of these writers, and the false and erroneous statements concerning the principles of the people, which are so manifest in the generality of those accounts, the Society has been earnestly solicited by many candid and intelligent persons to publish a plain and correct statement of facts relative to the history of the Society, in a concise form, containing its origin, progress and present state; with a fair view of the religious faith and practice of the Society, and the principles on which their peculiar tenets are founded.

In compliance with these repeated calls, and with a view to afford the candid and unprejudiced of all classes a fair opportunity of examining for themselves, and obtaining a correct knowledge of the truth from the proper source, the following pages have been written, and are now offered to the public in a form which may easily be obtained and readily perused by every one who desires it.

We have not written merely with a view to multiply books, nor to supersede the necessity of those already published by the Society, and which have proved highly useful, and done much towards affecting the important object for which they were intended; especially that entitled, "*The Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing*," which has had an extensive circulation.* And if its irresistible truth, and the plainness of its doctrines have excited a few sneering comments, and thus disclosed the rancor of one or two ecclesiastical dignitaries; yet no one has ever been able to

* We refer the reader to that book, and to Dunlavy's Manifesto, for further information.

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overthrow the principles contained in it; nor has any pers possessing the spirit of candor and discernment ever attempted

Nor have we written with a view to excite controversy, nor pr voke the resentment of any class of people whatever. Our on object is to satisfy candid enquirers, and to give information co cerning our faith, principles and practice, in plain and intelligib language, to all who are willing to receive it. And as for tho who *care for none of these things*, and have no disposition to he our testimony, we are quite willing they should enjoy their ow opinions, and let ours alone: we do not wish to disturb ther We live in a country which boasts highly of the freedom of i religious institutions; and religion is, or ought to be an object free choice with every one.

We are not ignorant that much has been written and publishe from time to time, from a spirit of enmity and detraction, by thos who would gladly renew against us, those scenes of religious into erance which formerly deluged the earth in blood, were it in the power. However doubtful this may appear to those who kno not the enmity of such characters, experience has taught us tha the spirit of persecution is the same now that it was then, an would display itself in the same manner, were it under no re straint. The spirit of persecution is not governed by truth an right reason; nor is the tongue of calumny guided by candor an impartiality. And whatever pretences any of our calumniator may make to either, their writings sufficiently prove that the were under the government of their malignant passions.

It has always been the fate of truth to be stigmatized and slan dered by falsehood. Whenever the spirit of truth has, in any age been revealed to any people, *the father of lies* has never failed t dispense among his children, a sufficient portion of the spirit o falsehood to combat the spirit of truth, and scandalize all wh maintain it. The great Captain of our salvation was subjected t the scorn and derision of the children of the *wicked one*, and en dured the reproaches of the emissaries of Satan. He was charge with gluttony and drunkenness, and reproached with associating with publicans and sinners. He was also accused of casting ou devils by Beelzebub the prince of devils; and he repeatedly assur

ed his followers that they would suffer the same indignities and reproaches. "If they have called the master of the house Beelze-"bub, how much more them of his household? If they have per-"secuted me, they will also persecute you. If ye were of the "world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of "the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the "world hateth you."*

It is well known that the primitive christians were greatly slandered and stigmatized by their heathen neighbors, and every false report that scandal could bestow or malice dictate, was put in circulation, and urged upon the public as positive facts that could easily be proved by eye and ear witnesses in abundance. And when we take into consideration the remarkable similarity that appears between the reports against the primitive christians, and those that have been circulated against the believers in the present testimony since it was first made known in this country, especially in the earlier period of their faith, it seems as though the most obstinate unbelievers could not but see and acknowledge the striking resemblance, and conclude that these reports must all have originated from the same source, and that they are directed against the same sort of people.

Celsus the epicurean, upon what he called good authority, charged Jesus Christ with being the offspring of adultery; and asserted, "That the mother of Jesus being great with child, was put away by the carpenter who had espoused her, he having convicted her of adultery with a soldier named *Pantheras*." Celsus further adds, "that having been turned out of doors by her husband, she wandered about in a shameful manner, till she brought forth Jesus in an obscure place."† Such are the charges of this ancient heathen calumniator against the Virgin Mary. And influenced by the same malignant spirit, some *modern Celsuses*, upon what they call good authority, have charged Ann Lee with lewdness and intoxication. But those who best knew the Virgin Mary, knew that the story of that ancient calumniator was false; and those who best knew Ann Lee, know that the stories of these modern calumniators are false.

* Matt. x. 25, and John xv. 19, 20. † See Lardner's Works, vol. viii. p. 19,

The apostles and primitive christians were charged with being drunk with new wine; because under the operation of the Holy Ghost, they worshipped God in a manner so different from that practiced by the Scribes and Pharisees, and the rest of the unbelieving Jews. The unbelievers and enemies of the cross could then say they saw it with their own eyes, and could therefore report it as an undeniable fact. And doubtless many unbelievers who heard and believed this report, thought it as presumptious in Peter and the rest of the apostles to pretend to deny it, as to deny that their accusers had eyes, seeing their conduct was so visible to all around them. Peter however did deny it with boldness and confidence; but we do not find that their enemies were willing to believe him: for their enmity and opposition still continued. Yet this *new wine*, as they called it, had a powerful effect in producing faith in the multitude, and in turning many souls from the error of their ways: But the apostles suffered much persecution in consequence of it.

The charge of drunkenness alleged against Ann Lee and her companions, had no more foundation in truth, than the same charges alleged against the apostles and primitive christians at the day of Pentecost. The truth is, they were under the operation of the same Spirit; and it was attended with the same effects on those who received it, and excited the same opposition in their enemies, and gave rise to the same false accusations. And tho this and other charges of immoral conduct have originated entirely from the blindness and opposition of their accusers, who viewed every thing which was said and done among the believers, through the eyes of enmity, prejudice and unbelief; yet these calumnies are still maintained by the enemies of the cross, and eye witnesses are not wanting, who can attest to these things with as much assurance as the unbelieving Jews could testify that the apostles were drunk at the day of Pentecost, because they saw it with their own eyes.

"But every tree is known by its fruit." It would indeed be a most extraordinary phenomenon in nature for grapes to spring from thorns, or figs from thistles. Nor would it be less extraordinary for a religion productive of the best moral principles and practice, to spring from drunkenness and debauchery; or in other words, from leaders and founders who were so notorious for base-

ness and immorality as the first leaders of the United Society have been represented. It is truly surprising that the propagators of such reports cannot themselves see the inconsistency, and no longer expose themselves to ridicule for believing and propagating reports which, to all men of sense, must appear incredible.

It is much to be regretted that any writers who are not personally acquainted with the United Society, should have recourse to the malignant slanders of the basest characters for information; or that they should even suppose that they could obtain any correct information from such a source. Tho these slanders have, in a variety of instances, proceeded from persons who have occasionally visited the Society, and from their natural opposition to a life of purity, joined with an inherent propensity to slander, have afterwards taken occasion to indulge that propensity for their own gratification; yet they have mostly originated from those who have apostatized from the Society, or were excluded from it for their own immoral conduct.

And it is well known that apostates from any religious society whatever, will naturally incline to seek the friendship of the world, and endeavor to justify themselves to the public for their apostacy; and the only reasonable prospect of success many such can have, depends on successfully slandering the society from which they have apostatized. This is a matter of such frequent occurrence in all societies, that it cannot reasonably be disputed. Indeed it is the natural consequence of their apostacy: for they very well know that if they should speak or write favorably of the society from which they have apostatized, every body would be ready to reproach them for their folly. And tho some who have left this Society, have been candid enough to tell the truth, and acknowledge their folly; yet the greater part have found it more to their present interest to charge the fault of their apostacy upon the Society, than to take it to themselves, even if they were obliged to admit that the Society possessed some good qualities.

But there is no man nor woman, who is well acquainted with the Society and its principles, and who has spoken and written from a principle of candor and conscious integrity of mind, that has, under the influence of this principle, ever written or spoken any

thing whatever, against the established principles and practices of the Society. This we can assert with confidence; because we know that such a character will not do it. Doubtless much has been spoken and written from false information, and erroneous impressions, by those who never had any personal acquaintance with the Society, which is, in many respects, quite unfavorable, and for which the writers may find some apology in their want of correct information, without being chargeable with any design to calumniate the Society. But those who write for the public, ought to consider their responsibility to the public for the truth of what they publish, and not run the risk of scattering false information through the world, and imposing upon public credulity by neglecting a careful examination into the truth of what they are about to publish.

As to the misconduct of individual members of the Society, it has generally proceeded from those who have afterwards left the Society; and in several well known instances, such individuals have accused the Society of crimes which they themselves had committed, and for which they were excluded from the Society. Nor need it appear strange that those who have been excluded from the Society by their own unfaithfulness, should prove to be the calumniators of the Society which they have left, especially when they very well know that there are so many in the world who are always more ready to believe evil reports, than to seek after the truth. But *truth is truth*, and the truth will stand, when all falsehood and deception will entirely be done away. The world will yet know the real foundation of all those false charges and base calumnies, and be fully convinced of the baseness of those characters who have so maliciously fabricated and propagated them.

Tho we feel unwilling to hold up names to public censure; yet justice and truth require that we should bear testimony against injustice and deception. Of all classes of writers we consider the malignant slanderer as the most vile and contemptible, and the least deserving of attention. And tho numbers of that class have endeavored to distinguish themselves by their writings against the Society; yet we have never met with any that we considered as deserving a serious reply on our part; and if we should ever at-

tempt a direct reply to any such writer, it must be merely for the sake of those who are in danger of being deceived and imposed upon by them, and for no other cause. Tho we have no wish to injure them in person or character; yet as they have exposed themselves by their malignant calumnies, it becomes necessary for us to caution the public against imposition from such characters.

The great professions of truth and impartiality, and the imposing appearance of honesty and candour in the writings of some of these calumniators, have doubtless deceived many. So a counterfeiter may impose his trash upon the public by imitating genuine bank bills, and may deceive thousands; yet all the arts of deception can never make a *bad* bill *good*, nor transform falsehood into truth; the deception will be discovered and the deceiver will be detected in the end. Nothing but the plain and simple truth will pass the final trial; and every man's work will eventually prove what he is.

Among all the accounts of the United Society that have ever yet appeared before the public, from under the hands of those who have apostatized from the Society, whatever the writer's pretensions might be, we have never yet seen one that has met our approbation, or that we could justly consider as entitled to the character of truth, honesty or impartiality. And all who have drawn their accounts from such writers, have only deceived themselves and the public in so doing. Tho we are far from feeling any disposition to reply to such writers; yet we think we may be fully justified in stating as a general remark, that those who have written against the Society, or in any way endeavored to calumniate it, after having apostatized from it, have never yet raised their reputation for honesty and integrity, nor mended their moral characters by their works.

Notwithstanding all the pretended discoveries of error and delusion, and all the charges of injustice and deception, by those who have left the Society, not a solitary instance has ever yet appeared, where any one, after having renounced the faith of the Society, and rejected the testimony maintained by the people, has ever turned to a more moral course of life. If, as they pretend, they found the principles of the people bad, or their lives immoral,

they have turned to worse principles, and more immoral lives. Nor do we believe that there can be found throughout the United States, a single instance where any such person has pursued a better course of life, or obtained a better reputation for religion, honesty, morality or integrity than he had before. But instances enough may be found of increasing degeneracy and depravity in those who have apostatized.

There are many among mankind who are willing to acknowledge the moral principles and practice of the Society, in its present state, to be very good, and readily allow the people much credit for their honesty and sobriety, their exemplary lives and morals, their uprightness and punctuality in all their dealings, their kindness and charity to the poor, their industry, temperance and good economy in the management of all their concerns, and the like; but still insist that their principles and practice are greatly changed from what they were formerly; that they have renounced many of the wild extravagances in principle and practice, which were formerly taught by Ann Lee and the first leaders of the Society; and that, of course, the people have greatly reformed, both in principle and practice.

With regard to a change of principles, we can assure our readers that there was not a single principle of faith ever advanced by Mother Ann and the first Elders, of which we have any knowledge, but is still maintained by the Society, without any variation whatever. As all the principles then advanced have been fully and abundantly proved by long experience, and the increasing light and understanding in the Society, to be principles of truth; so the practice of the Society has ever been conformable to them. Among many other ridiculous charges of the like nature, it has often been asserted and reiterated, "that Ann Lee declared that she should never die; and that the principle was taught and believed by the people in her day, that after having arrived to a certain degree of purity and holiness, they would never die; and that after the death of Ann Lee, the principle was discarded as unsound and untenable." Those who are so ready to charge inconsistency upon the Society, have harped much upon this story, while in fact, the inconsistency lies altogether in their own ignorance of the truth.

Now let us for a moment, examine this wonderful charge, and see whether those *wise theologists* who have made their sneering comments upon it, cannot with equal propriety, bring the same charge against Jesus Christ. "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death." And again: "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die."* No reasonable person will pretend that Jesus alluded to the death of the natural body; if he did, his words have certainly failed. Yet when the Jews heard this testimony, they replied, "Now we know thou hast a devil."—Mother Ann testified that the gospel of Christ was the power of eternal life, and that those who kept it would never fall under the power of death;† and we still testify the same. So far from asserting that her natural body would never die, she invariably maintained the contrary; and no different doctrine has ever been maintained in the Society, from its first rise to the present day.—But as the unbelieving Jews charged Jesus Christ with falsehood, and with having a devil, because he bore the testimony above quoted; so the unbelievers in this day have charged Ann Lee with falsehood, and her followers with inconsistency.

As to the charge of changing our practice, we readily acknowledge that the United Society does not follow the example of any other religious denomination, neither in principle nor practice: for we have long been convinced that a uniform course of religious profession, joined to a lifeless stupidity in divine things, cannot be well-pleasing in the sight of God, especially when blended with an ardent pursuit of worldly honor and glory. And we have never seen any profit in practicing the same dull round of religious forms and ceremonies, from year to year, and from age to age, while the only active principle of life is swallowed up in the things of time. Nor do we see any consistency in making religious profession a mere name, by constantly pursuing a practice in conformity with that of those who make no religious profession at all.

But what is the amount of this charge of change in our practice? Shall a farmer who begins in the spring to plow his ground and prepare it for a future crop, be charged with instability and change, because he does not keep on plowing through the whole season, instead of sowing his seed, or cultivating his growing crops,

* John viii. 51 and xi. 26. † See Rev. xx. 6.

according to the requirements of the season? Can he obtain a crop by continual plowing, without sowing or planting? Does he not act more consistently in keeping pace with the course of the season, and varying his work according to the season? By pursuing this course, he may reasonably expect to gather a crop in its season; but if he should continue to plow all the year round, and never plant nor sow, nor tend his crops while in the progress of vegetation, he could never expect any harvest, nor would he deserve any.

The first leaders of the Society may be compared to people going into a new country, and settling in the wilderness, where the first object is to cut and clear the land, and burn the rubbish, before the ground can be suitably prepared for cultivation. In this operation, the axe and the fire are used with no sparing hand; and the falling of trees and the crackling of burning brush and useless rubbish occasion much noise and bustle, and great confusion, especially among the wild beasts and noxious vermin that infest the land. These are now obliged to flee for their lives, into some other part of the wilderness, or the fire will consume them. But when the land is sufficiently cleared, and the rubbish consumed, and the wild vermin have all retreated, and the careful husbandman has securely fenced his field, he can then go on to prepare and cultivate his ground in peace; and if he is faithful to manage his business as he ought, he will continue to improve his premises, from year to year; so that in a few years, this once dreary wilderness will be seen to "blossom as the rose." Such has been the progress of the United Society, and such is the nature of the changes which it has passed through.

Doubtless many of the sentiments contained in the following pages, will be treated with contempt and ridicule by those professors of the christian name who are still bound in the chains of anti-christian bigotry and superstition. Nor need it be a matter of surprize to any one if they should meet with opposition from such characters: for who can expect people of this description to throw off their chains, and divest themselves of prejudice, without a severer struggle than they are generally willing to make. Such people usually feel too much of "the pride of life," to acknowledge truths which must necessarily require a sacrifice of that pride.—

The Scribes and Pharisees of old had too much of this sort of pride, and too lofty an idea of that Messiah whom their ancient prophets described in such glowing figures, to be willing to believe that Jesus of Nazareth was that exalted personage. His character and birth, as well as the low character and callings of his disciples, appeared too mean and contemptible, and their number too small, and their connexions too well known to admit even a moment's belief, in their minds, that he was the promised MESSIAH.

And why should we expect the Scribes and Pharisees of the present day to act more out of character than those of old did? They are no more willing to submit to the cross, and have their pride stained, than their predecessors were. They view a small Society of illiterate and contemptible Shakers, (as they sometimes call them) in the same light that their ancestors did the ancient disciples and primitive christians; and like them, they have the unbelieving world on their side. And will they forego the friendship of the world, and sacrifice their spiritual pride, and the honors of their dignified station, with all they hold dear on earth, and yield their assent to a testimony so much beneath the calculations of all their learned theology, and all their towering ideas of the millennium? It is too much to expect of them.

The small number of the Society, in comparison with those of other denominations, may be considered by some, as an argument against the truth of the testimony, that this is the second appearing of Christ; and it may also produce a belief in the minds of some, that the Society can never become numerous, especially as a life of continency is so opposite to the natural propensities of human nature, that few will be found willing to embrace it. These reasons will doubtless appear plausible and natural to people in a natural state; but God is able to accomplish his own work, not only by small means and instruments, but by small beginnings, as he always has done, in all ages of the world. The little stone spoken of in Daniel, which was cut out of the mountain without hands, and which smote the great image, "became a great mountain and filled the whole earth." This significant figure shows in a very striking light, what the hand of God can effect by small means, and what the real work of God, tho small in its commencement,

will finally amount to. The smallness of the work is no discouragement to us, nor any disparagement to its first founders. It is indeed a work of too much purity to find a rapid increase among the inhabitants of a sinful world, who are so far lost and sunk in their carnal corruptions.

We shall make no apologies for what we have written, as to the matter or manner. It has been our aim to state the plain truth without covering or disguise, according to the best of our understanding and abilities; and also to comprise the different subjects in as small a compass as could conveniently be done, and convey a clear understanding to the reader. To comprise much matter in a little space, and give a full and comprehensive view of many important subjects in a small compass, is not a small task. How far we have effected the object, remains to be seen and judged of by the candid and judicious reader. Plainness, clearness and simplicity have been objects at which we have aimed in our manner and style of writing; and we trust the matter will be found intelligible to every class of readers.

With respect to the subjects upon which we have written, our object has been to give a summary view of the rise, progress and present state of the Society, together with a plain illustration of its faith and principles: a few other subjects might have been added with propriety; but we have aimed at brevity, and we think we have noticed those of the most importance, and such as may give satisfaction to candid inquirers after truth. But as the light of Divine truth is progressive in the Church, and as the preparatory work of salvation and redemption increases on earth; so the solemn and important truths of the gospel will continue, from time to time, to be more clearly manifested to mankind. As to the real substance of the gospel of salvation, it was fully revealed to the first witnesses of Christ's second appearing; but as the work of salvation advances, the light becomes more clear, and truth appears more plain; and while those who receive and obey it find increasing peace and justification; so those who see and reject it, will find their condemnation to increase with the increasing light of truth.

CALVIN GREEN,
SETH Y. WELLS.

New-Lebanon, May 12, 1823.

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PART I.

Rise and Progress of the United Society, including some Account of the first Witnesses.

CHAPTER 1.

Introductory Remarks, comprising a short sketch of the state of Religion, and the operations of the Spirit of God which led to the rise of the Society, and to the commencement of the present testimony of the Gospel of Christ's Second Appearing.

During the ministration of Jesus Christ upon earth, his life and doctrines were in direct opposition to all the inclinations of the fallen nature of man. He revealed the Will of his heavenly Father, and this Will was the very essence of the gospel. After his ascension, a church was formed and established according to the genuine operations of his divine Spirit. This was accomplished by the agency of the Holy Spirit, through the ministry of the apostles, and was a pattern of the true order of the church of Christ, and "a kind of first-fruits" of the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth. But that order was of short duration. By a declension of the true spirit of christianity it gradually fell away, until the spirit of Antichrist, through the influence of false teachers, under the christian name, gained the ascendency, and began his dark and deplorable reign, which continued for the space of twelve hundred and sixty years.

During this long and gloomy period, "darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people:" so that there was not found upon earth a church which stood in the true order and power of the primitive church of Christ. For altho there were many bright and powerful witnesses of the truth, during the whole of that period, who testified against the growing corruptions of the times; yet in consequence of the tyrannical dominion assumed over the consciences of men, these witnesses were not suffered to build in the true order of the church of Christ. This dominion, which originated in the spirit of Antichrist, was strengthened and supported by the combination of the civil and ecclesiastical powers which were concentrated in their own established churches. Hence these churches became the churches of Antichrist, and under the name of Christ, assumed the authority of persecuting the true witnesses of God wherever they could be found; because the testimony of these witnesses stood in opposition to their antichristian dominion, and was a testimony of condemnation to their false religion; and thus *the power of the holy people was scattered.*

But when the persecuting power of Antichrist began to be weak-

ened by that memorable division in his kingdom, occasioned by what is called *The Reformation*, then a way was opened for man to contend for his long lost liberty. From that period many men of rational and discerning minds began to assert the rights of conscience, and to contend for civil and religious liberty; and hence forth liberty of conscience continued to gain ground until the latter part of the seventeenth century, when it was so far understood and acknowledged, that the witnesses of God began to live and stand up in the life and power of their testimony.

About this time, many religious revivals broke out in various parts of Europe, particularly in France and Germany, and continued, with different degrees of light and power, for many years. Liberty of conscience was proclaimed in England about the year 1689, and the subject excited public attention, and gained considerable influence in many other parts of Europe. This was an event highly favorable to those honest souls who were hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and who had hitherto groaned under the despotic and persecuting power of ecclesiastical tyranny, while they earnestly sought the pure and undefiled religion of the Prince of Peace.

The remarkable revival which happened about this time, in the province of Dauphiny and Vivarais, in France, excited great attention. The subjects of this work were wrought upon in a very extraordinary manner, both in body and mind; nor could the violent agitations of their bodies, nor the powerful operations of their spirits which appeared in the flaming and irresistable energy of their testimony, be imputed to any thing short of the *mighty power of God*, with which they were evidently inspired. Persons of both sexes and all ages, were the subjects of these divine inspirations. Men, women, and even little childen, were wrought upon in a manner which struck the spectators with wonder and astonishment; and their powerful admonitions and prophetic warnings "were heard and received with reverence and awe."

They testified that *the end of all things drew nigh*, and admonished the people to *repent and amend their lives*. They gave warning of *the near aproach of the Kingdom of God, the acceptable year of the Lord;* and in many prophetic messages, declared to the world, that those numerous scripture prophecies concerning *the new heavens and the new earth; the kingdom of the Mesiah; the marriage of the Lamb; the first resurrection*, and *the new Jerusalem descending from above*, were *near at hand*, and would shortly be accomplished.

They also testified, with great power and energy of spirit, against those false systems of religion, and that antichristian dominion, which had borne such extensive sway among mankind,

and predicted their certain downfall and destruction. They also declared that when all these false systems of human invention, and all the deceitful and abominable works of man should be pulled down and destroyed, there would be but one Lord, one faith, one heart and one voice among mankind. And they also declared that these things would be wrought upon man by spiritual arms, proceeding from the mouths of living witnesses who, by the inspiration of the spirit, should be sent forth as laborers in the vineyard.

These people, like all other true witnesses of God, were rejected by the unbelieving world as false prophets, and their testimony greatly perverted and misrepresented. And probably too, as often happens in times of great outpourings of the divine Spirit, there were individuals found among them into whose hearts Satan found means to infuse a false testimony, with a view to dishonor the true testimony of faithful witnesses, by associating with it the dictates of his own lying spirit.*

Unbelievers, who slight every manifestation of true light, will often take occasion by the false predictions of such individuals, to reject and misrepresent the whole as unworthy of credit. Hence it was said, they predicted the immediate fulfilment of their prophecy, and stated the precise time of its accomplishment, which was evidently not given them to understand. But the candid believer will readily discern between truth and falsehood, and pay that respect to the true manifestations of the Spirit of God which their importance deserves.

But even admitting that those who were in the genuine spirit of that work, did state the time for the accomplishment of these predictions at three years, as has been frequently asserted, what conclusion can be drawn from thence to falsify these predictions? It is well known that St. John stated the time for the reign of antichrist at *forty and two months*,† which, according to the usual calculation of expositors, is now generally supposed to mean 1260 years, taking each prophetic day for a year, as is usual in explaining the language of prophecy.

Calculating then by this rule, their three years, or thirty-six months, allowing but thirty days to the month, amount to 1080 prophetic days; but allowing 365 days to the year, they make 1095 days, or so many natural years. And if these prophets did, in truth, state the time for the full accomplishment of all their predictions at three years, can any one deny that this is the true calculation? Or dare any one affirm that all these things will not be accomplished in 1080 or 1095 years from the date of their prophecy? It is the divine spirit of their testimony, and the real accom-

* So it was of old "When the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, Satan came also among them." Job ii. 1.

† See Rev. xi. 2. and xiii. 5.

plishment of their predictions at which we look; not at the false coloring and evident misrepresentations which have been put upon them by the unbelievers of their times. That the work has already commenced, we ourselves are witnesses; but how long before it will be fully accomplished, must rest with that Almighty Being who has already begun the work, and will complete it in his own due time.

Notwithstanding these witnesses of God met with much opposition from the unbelieving world, and were continually persecuted by the wicked; yet they greatly increased in numbers, and boldly continued their testimony for many years; so that their prophetic warnings extended over the greatest part of Europe.

About the year 1706, a few of them went over to England where they renewed their testimony; and through the ministration of the same spirit to others, many were united to them; so that in a short time they became very numerous, and their testimony became extensive and powerful. Being commissioned by the Divine Spirit, and sent only as witnesses to warn a sinful world of approaching events, they formed no regular societies, and established no churches; but faithfully executed their office and delivered the messages which were given them, and thus finished their work and left the event to God. And tho the greater part, after having finished their testimony, soon died away; yet many of them maintained their confidence through life, and a portion of them, who still retained the power of their testimony, in a greater or less degree, and having full faith in its accomplishment, stood as living witnesses of God, and, like faithful watchmen of the night, waited the approaching dawn.

About the year 1747, a small number who were endowed with the spirit of these witnesses, were led by the influence of the Divine Spirit to unite themselves into a small society, in the neighborhood of Manchester, under the ministry of James and Jane Wardley. These were both sincerely devoted to the cause of God, and were blest with great manifestations of divine light. James was greatly gifted in public speaking; and was remarkably clear, solid and powerful in his testimony against sin. Both he and his wife possessed great meekness and humility, were very plain and decent in their dress and deportment, and unassuming in their manners.

This infant society practiced no forms, and adopted no creeds as rules of faith or worship; but gave themselves up to be led and guided entirely by the operations of the Spirit of God. Their meetings were powerful and animated, attended with remarkable signs and operations, and with the spirit of prophecy and divine revelation. The manifestations of divine light in visions and revelations, raised in them the warning voice of God against all sin and every evil work. They boldly testified, *that the second ap*

pearing of Christ was at hand; and *that the church was rising in her full and transcendent glory, which would effect the final downfall of Antichrist.* They affirmed that the work of *the great day of God* was then commencing, and would increase until every promise of God should be fulfilled.

Sometimes, after sitting awhile in silent meditation, they were seized with a mighty trembling, under which they would often express the indignation of God against all sin. At other times they were exercised with singing, shouting and leaping for joy at the near prospect of salvation. They were often exercised with great agitations of body and limbs, running and walking the floor, with a variety of signs and operations, and swiftly passing and repassing each other, like clouds agitated with a mighty wind. No human power could imitate the wonderful operations with which they were affected while under the influence of these spiritual signs. From these exercises, so strange in the eyes of mankind, they received the appellation of *Shakers*, which has been the most common name of distinction ever since.

These various and extraordinary operations, together with the singularity of their lives, and their powerful testimony against the wickedness of the world around them, naturally exposed them to much persecution. Their houses were often beset by mobs, their windows broken, and their persons shamefully abused. But they bore these things patiently, and fearlessly continued their assemblies and their testimony. Their meetings, which first began at Bolton, near Manchester, were afterwards held alternately at Bolton and Manchester; and occasionally at Cheshire, Mayortown, and other places in the vicinity of Manchester.

They continued to increase in light and power, with occasional additions to their number, till about the year 1770, when by a special manifestation of Divine light, the present testimony of salvation and eternal life was fully revealed to *Ann Lee*, and by her to the society. As this extraordinary woman, concerning whom so much has been reported and published abroad in the world, was the distinguished personage to whom Christ revealed himself in his true character, in this day of his second appearing, it will be necessary, in proceeding with this work, to give some account of her life, character and ministry.

CHAPTER II.

Sketches of the life of Mother Ann Lee: her birth and parentage: her connexion with the society of James and Jane Wardley: her religious exercises and sufferings: her revelation and testimony: persecutions in England: voyage to America.

ANN LEE was the daughter of John Lee, of Manchester, in

England. She was born in the year 1736.* Her father was by occupation a blacksmith, and tho poor, he was respectable in character, moral in principle, honest and punctual in his dealings, and industrious in business. Her mother was esteemed as a religious and very pious woman. They had eight children, five sons and three daughters. Their children, as was then common with poor people in manufacturing towns, were brought up to work instead of being sent to school. By this means Ann acquired a habit of industry, but could neither read nor write. During her childhood and youth, she was employed in a cotton factory, and was afterwards a cutter of hatter's fur. She was also, for some time, employed as a cook in the Manchester infirmary, and was peculiarly distinguished for her faithfulness, neatness, prudence and economy.

In her childhood she discovered a very bright and active genius, was remarkably sagacious, but serious and thoughtful, and never addicted to play like other children. In early childhood she was the subject of religious impressions, and was peculiarly favored with heavenly visions. As she advanced in years she was strongly impressed with a sense of the great depravity of human nature, and of the odiousness of sin, and especially of the impure and indecent nature of sexual coition. She often expressed her feelings to her mother concerning these things, and earnestly desired that she might be kept from the snares of sin, and from those abominations which her soul abhorred.

But not having attained that knowledge of God which she early desired, and finding no one to strengthen and assist her in the pursuit of that true holiness which she sought after, nor even to encourage her to withstand the powerful examples of a lost world, (her mother having deceased while she was yet young,) she grew up in the same fallen nature with the rest of mankind, and through the importunities of her relations, was married to Abraham Stanley, a blacksmith by trade. By him she had four children who all died in infancy; one only, which was a daughter, attained to the age of about six years. They lived together at her father's house, in peace and harmony, and procured a comfortable living. But the convictions of her youth often returned upon her with great force, which at length brought her under excessive tribulation of soul. In this situation she sought earnestly for deliverance from the bondage of sin, and gave herself no rest, day nor night, but often spent whole nights in laboring and crying to God for deliverance from sin.

While under these exercises of mind, she became acquainted with James and Jane Wardley, and the society under their care.

* It is said she was born the last day of February.

As these people were favored with a greater degree of divine light, and a more clear and pointed testimony against the nature of sin than had hitherto been made manifest, Ann readily embraced their testimony, and united herself to the society in the month of September 1758, being then in the 23d year of her age. The light of these people led them to an open confession of every sin which they had committed, and to a full and final cross against every thing which they knew to be evil: hence they were endowed with great power over sin; and hence Ann found that protection which she had so long desired, and which, for the time being, was answerable to her faith. By her faithful obedience to the counsel and instruction of her leaders, she was baptized into the same spirit, and, by degrees, attained to the full knowledge and experience in spiritual things which they had found.

As she occasionally related to the American believers some of her experience and sufferings in England, it may not be improper to give the following short sketch concerning the early part of her faith, in her own words.

"Soon after I set out to travail in the way of God, I labored "nights in the works of God. Sometimes I labored all night, "continually crying to God for my own redemption; sometimes "I went to bed and slept; but in the morning I could not feel "that sense of the work of God which I did before I slept. This "brought me into great tribulation. Then I cried to God, and "promised him, that if he would give me the same sense that I had "before I slept, I would labor all night. This I did many nights; "and in the day time I put my hands to work and my heart to "God; and when I felt weary and need of rest, I laboured for the "power of God, and the refreshing operations of the power of "God would release me, so that I would feel able to go to my work "again.

"Many times when I was about my work, I felt my soul overwhelmed with sorrow; and I used to work as long as I could "keep it concealed, and then run to get out of sight, lest some one "should pity me with that pity which God did not. In my travail and tribulation, my sufferings were so great, that my flesh "consumed upon my bones, and bloody sweat pressed through "the pores of my skin, and I became as helpless as an infant. "And when I was brought through, and born into the spiritual "kingdom, I was like an infant just born into the world. They "see colors and objects; but they know not what they see; and "so it was with me when I was born into the spiritual world. "But before I was twenty-four hours old, I saw, and I knew what "I saw."

John Hocknell, who was well acquainted with her in the time

of her experience and sufferings in England, used frequently to speak of them, with many peculiar circumstances that came under his knowledge. According to his account, as well as that of her own, and others who came from England with her, it appears that in watchings, fastings, tears and incessant cries to God, she labored day and night, for deliverance from the very nature of sin; and that, under the most severe tribulation of mind, and the most violent temptations and buffetings of the enemy, the agony of her soul was often so extreme as to occasion a perspiration of blood. Sometimes, for whole nights together, her cries, screeches and groans were such as to fill every soul around with fear and trembling.

By these painful sufferings and deep mortifications her flesh sometimes wasted away, like that of a person in a consumption, till she became so weak and emaciated that her friends were obliged to support and nourish her like a helpless infant; altho she possessed by nature a sound and strong constitution, and an invincible fortitude of mind. Tho Ann was wrought upon in this manner, more or less, for the space of nine years; yet she often had intervals of releasment, in which her bodily strength and vigor was sometimes miraculously renewed, and her soul was at times filled with heavenly visions and divine revelations. By these means the way of God, and the nature of his work, gradually opened upon her mind with increasing light and understanding. The divine manifestations which she received, from time to time, were communicated to the society, and tended greatly to enlighten the understandings, and encourage the faith of the members, and to increase and confirm their testimony.

Her mind, ever intent on the great work of salvation, was deeply affected concerning the lost state of mankind, which she clearly saw in all their works. But the real foundation of that loss was still concealed from her view; nor could she see any prospect of recovery under existing circumstances: for she had long been convinced that there was nothing in all their religious professions nor practises that could save them from sin here, or furnish any reasonable hope of salvation hereafter. Hence she spent much time in earnest and incessant cries to God, to shew her the real foundation of man's loss, what it was, and wherein it consisted; how the way of salvation could be effectually opened to a lost world in its present state; and how the great work of redemption was to be accomplished.

While in deep exercise of mind concerning these things, she was brought into a state of excessive tribulation of soul, in which she felt her way hedged up, seemingly, on every side, and was constrained to cry mightily to God, to open some way of deliverance. In the midst of her sufferings and earnest cries to God, her

soul was filled with divine light, and the mysteries of the spiritual world were brought clearly to her understanding. She saw the Lord Jesus Christ in his glory, who revealed to her the great object of her prayers, and fully satisfied all the desires of her soul. The most astonishing visions and divine manifestations were presented to her view in so clear and striking a manner, that the whole spiritual world seemed displayed before her. In these extraordinary manifestations, she had a full and clear view of the mystery of iniquity, of the root and foundation of human depravity, and of the very act of transgression, committed by the first man and woman, in the garden of Eden. Here she saw whence and wherein all mankind were lost from God, and clearly realized the only possible way of recovery. This revelation she received in the summer of 1770, in prison, where she was confined on account of her religious principles, under a pretence of her having profaned the sabbath.

Tho Ann had before received many extraordinary manifestations of God, tho she had received great light concerning the depravity of human nature, and the effects of man's loss from God, and tho she had taken up her cross against the carnal gratifications of the flesh, and had testified her faith to the society on this subject, many of whom, in consequence of her testimony, had walked in the same faith; yet, not having then received a clear revelation of the root of human depravity, and the cause of man's fall, she had continued to yield obedience to James and Jane Wardley, as her superiors, and was eminently useful to them in leading, teaching, strengthening and protecting the society.

But when she was released from her imprisonment, and came to reveal to the society these last extraordinary manifestations, so great was the display of divine light with which her soul was filled, and so mighty the power of God which accompanied her testimony, and so keen the searching power of her spirit in discovering and bringing to light the hidden works of darkness, that every soul present was struck with astonishment and filled with fear and trembling. They saw at once that the candle of the Lord was in her hand, and that she was able by the light thereof, to search every heart and try every soul among them. From this time she was received and acknowledged as the first visible leader of the church of God upon earth.

The preceding work in this society, under the ministration of James and Jane Wardley, was evidently preparatory to the ushering in of the second coming of Christ; and it may with propriety be compared to the work of John the Baptist, or the spirit of Elias, the forerunner of the Lord Jesus. When therefore Ann was baptized into the fulness of the spirit and work of that society, she was

then prepared for the baptism of the Holy Ghost, and was made a fit vessel to receive the true Spirit of Christ, and to revive and bring to light his perfect law of righteousness for the direction and salvation of all souls who were willing to obey her testimony; and here commenced the real manifestation of Christ's second appearance.

From this time the light and power of God revealed in Ann, and through her administered to those who received her testimony, had such sensible effect in giving them power over all sin, and filling them with visions, revelations and other gifts of God, that she was readily acknowledged as their spiritual *Mother in Christ*. Hence she received the title of *Mother*;* and hence those of the society who received and obeyed her testimony, found a great increase in the power and gifts of God; while on the other hand, those who rejected it, lost all their former light and power, and fell back into a state of darkness, and into the common course of the world.

By the immediate revelation of Christ she henceforth bore an open testimony against the lustful gratifications of the flesh, as the source and foundation of human corruption; and testified, in the most plain and pointed manner, that no soul could follow Christ in the regeneration, while living in the works of natural generation, or in any of the gratifications of lust. Her testimony was often delivered with such mighty power of God, accompanied with such a heart-searching and soul-quickening spirit, that it seemed to penetrate every secret of the heart. By this means the most hidden abominations were often brought to light; and those secret acts of wickedness, which had been deceitfully covered under a fair outside profession of sanctity, were many times brought to view in such a manner as to make every guilty soul fear and tremble in her presence.

Here it may be proper to notice that, notwithstanding all Mother Ann's inward sufferings and tribulation, her outward afflictions and persecutions were often very severe and cruel. The powerful testimony which she maintained against all sin, together with the wonderful operations of the Spirit of God which prevailed in the meetings of her little society, through her ministration, excited public attention, and stirred up the malignant feelings of many, both professors and profane, of almost every class and description, to such a degree of enmity that, by formal opposition and tumultuous mobs, open persecution and secret malice, her very life seemed many times in great jeopardy. She was often shamefully and cruelly abused, and a number of times imprisoned. To state

* It has been asserted by some writers that she styled herself the *Elect Lady*; but this is a groundless charge: that title was given by her enemies in derision.

circumstantially, the many instances of her sufferings and imprisonment, would swell this volume beyond the limits prescribed. We shall only notice the following.

Her enemies, after seeking in vain for some plausible pretext to take her life, finally brought an accusation of blasphemy against her. They told her she must have her tongue bored through with a hot iron; and brought her before four ministers of the established church, with a view to obtain judgment against her. But these men, being desirous to hear her own testimony, gave her liberty to speak for herself. Accordingly she spoke, and manifested such evident power of God, that they thought proper to dismiss her; and admonished her accusers to let her alone, and not abuse her. Enraged and disappointed at not being able to enlist these ministers against her, her persecutors were determined to take the power of judgment into their own hands, and become at once her judges and executioners, and agreed to stone her to death as a blasphemer.

Accordingly they led her down into a valley, without the town, where she was followed by four of her brethren, namely, William Lee, James Whittaker, Daniel Whittaker and James Shepherd.* Her persecutors having provided themselves with a sufficient quantity of stones, suitable for their purpose, they placed themselves on the side of the hill, at a convenient distance, and began to throw their stones; but not being able, after repeated trials, to hit her or any of her companions, (except Daniel Whittaker, who received a slight wound on one of his temples,†) they fell into contention among themselves, and finally abandoned their design. Mother Ann, in relating these circumstances to some of the believers, said, 'While they were throwing their stones, I felt myself surrounded 'with the presence of God, and my soul was filled with love. I 'knew they could not kill me, because my work was not done; 'therefore I felt joyful and comfortable, while my enemies felt 'distress and confusion."

At another time an attempt was made upon her life; but it does not appear that this was done by any legal process, but rather, as is supposed, by the connivance of some of the officers of the stone prison with the designs of her enemies. She was taken and confined in a small cell of the prison, with an intention of starving her to death. Here she was kept fourteen days without any kind of sustenance, excepting what was conveyed to her privately, through the keyhole of the door, after the first two days, once in twenty-four

* This was not the James Shepherd who afterwards came to America with her; but another man of the same name, who was considered a faithful believer.

† This man afterwards fell away.

hours. This was done by one of the believers,* who found acces to the door of her prison, and inserted the stem of a pipe throug the keyhole, into the bowl of which he poured a small quantity c milk, mixed with a little wine, which was her only temporal sup port during the whole time of her imprisonment. At the end c fourteen days, the door was unlocked with the expectation of find ing her dead; but to the great surprise of her enemies, she was no only alive, but as well as before. Some who were present at th time, and saw her walk off in perfect health, remarked that it mus be owing to a supernatural power which attended her, and tha they did not believe it was right to confine or oppress her.

The last imprisonment which she suffered, while in England was done under pretence of her having profaned the sabbath. This appears to have been a preconcerted plan of her enemies, t prevent her and her little family from worshipping God on th sabbath, according to their custom. A number of spies had bee previously placed in the streets, under a pretence of preventin people from profaning the sabbath. The believers assembled tha morning at the house of John Lee, and began their worship, a usual, by singing and dancing. This was discovered by the spies and a mob was soon raised, headed by the principal warden, wh surrounded the house, burst open the doors, and ascended the stair into the third loft, where the believers were assembled. The were all seized without any ceremony, and immediately dragge down stairs; Mother Ann herself was dragged down by her feet and very much abused. They were all, excepting one man an two children,† immediately hurried off to the stone prison, and pu into close confinement. The next morning they were all release excepting Mother Ann and John Lee, her father, who were remov ed to the house of correction, where they were kept confined sev eral weeks, and then discharged.

These are but a part of the outward afflictions which Mothe Ann endured from her enemies in England. Besides many ci cumstances of less note, there were several other instances of abus which must inevitably have deprived her of life, had she not bee protected by that Almighty Being in whom she always trusted and it is worthy of remark, that nothing short of Divine Powe could have supported her through all these trying scenes, and ena bled her to maintain her testimony in the midst of a crooked an perverse generation. But in consequence of the sudden and un timely death of some of her most bitter persecutors, and the con viction of others, these cruel abuses finally ceased. Her enemie saw that she was evidently protected and supported, and her li

* James Whittaker, who was then a youth.
† One of these children was Mary Hocknell, now living at Watervliet.

preserved, by some interposing power, notwithstanding all their attempts to destroy it; and hence, for more than two years previous to her leaving England, she and her little band enjoyed their faith in peace. And tho there was no important addition to their number, yet the faith and substance of the gospel continued to increase in the hearts of the faithful. But their public testimony ceased in England about a year before they embarked for America.

Mother Ann, whose mind was ever intent on the work of God, and who always stood ready to obey any call of God to her, was at length, by a special revelation, directed to repair to America; and at the same time, she received a divine promise, that the work of God would greatly increase, and the millenial church would be established in that country. This revelation was communicated to the society, and was soon confirmed by signs, visions and extraordinary manifestations, to many individual members; and permission was given for all those of the society to accompany her, who were able, and who felt any special impressions on their own minds so to do. Accordingly those who became the companions of Mother Ann, in her voyage to America, and who were all, at that time, professedly members of the society, were Abm. Stanley, her husband, Wm. Lee, her brother, James Whittaker, John Hocknell, Richard Hocknell, son of John Hocknell, James Shepherd, Mary Partington, and Nancy Lee, a niece of Mother Ann. These eight were all that accompanied Mother Ann in her voyage to America.

Having settled their affairs, and made arrangements for the voyage, they embarked at Liverpool, on board the ship Mariah, Captain Smith, of New-York, and sailed on the 19th of May, 1774. Before they embarked, Mother Ann told the captain that he should not have whereof to accuse them, except it were concerning the law of their God. While on their passage, they went forth, in obedience to their inward feelings, to praise God in songs and in dances. This offended the captain to such a degree, that he threatened to throw them overboard, if they attempted the like exercise again. But as Mother Ann had put her trust in God, whom she feared, she was not willing to be restrained in her duty by the fear of mortals; she therefore chose to obey God rather than man, and accordingly went forth again, in obedience to the divine influences which she felt.

At this the captain became greatly enraged, and attempted to put his threats in execution. But that God in whom they trusted, and who had sent them to do his will, had power to protect them. This he did in a marvellous manner. It was in the evening, in time of a storm; and the ship suddenly sprung a leak, occasioned by the starting of a plank between wind and water. The water now flowed in so rapidly that, notwithstanding all their exertions

at the pumps, it gained upon them so fast, that the whole ship's crew were greatly alarmed. The captain turned pale as a corpse, and said they must all perish before morning; for he saw no possible means to save the ship from sinking.

But Mother Ann maintained her confidence in God, and said, "Captain, be of good cheer; there shall not a hair of our heads perish; we shall all arrive safe to America. I just now saw two bright angels of God standing by the mast, through whom I received this promise." She then encouraged the seamen, and she and her companions zealously assisted at the pumps. Shortly after this, a large wave struck the ship with great violence, and the loose plank was instantly closed to its place.

Whether this remarkable incident was effected by the violent force of the wave against the plank, or by some other unaccountable means, it was then viewed by all on board, as a miraculous interposition of Divine Providence in their favor. They were soon in a great measure released from the pumps; and the captain, after this, gave them free and full liberty to worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, and promised that he would never molest them again. He was faithful to his promise, and treated them with kindness and respect during the remainder of the voyage, and was afterwards free to declare, that had it not been for these people, he should have been sunk in the sea, and never reached America.

Thus, after enduring the storms and dangers of the sea, in an old leaky ship, which had been condemned as unfit for the voyage, and which came very near foundering at sea, they all arrived safe in New-York on the 6th of August following.

CHAPTER III.

Circumstances connected with the settlement of Mother Ann and her little society in America: Religious revival at New-Lebanon: Commencement and progress of the testimony, followed by persecution: Decease of Mother Ann, &c.

After Mother Ann and her little family arrived in this country, they passed through many scenes of difficulty, of a temporal nature. Being strangers in the land, and without any means of subsistence, excepting the daily labor of their own hands, they were obliged to seek employment where they could find it without hazarding the free enjoyment of their faith: for Mother Ann chose rather to rely upon the mercy of God for support and protection, than to court the friendship of the world, or to solicit their favor for the sake of any temporal advantages which she might obtain at the expence of her religious freedom, which was dearer to her than her life.

They were led however, to make some arrangements, in the first place, for their future residence, where they could be united in the mutual enjoyment of their faith, and wait the call of God to more extensive usefulness. Accordingly William Lee and John Hocknell went up the river and contracted for a lot of land near Niskeyuna, in the county of Albany, and returned again to New-York. John Hocknell soon after sailed for England, to bring out his family, and make further arrangements for the settlement of the society in this country.

Mother Ann accompanied her brother William and some of the rest of the society to Albany, where they found employment in their several occupations. She then returned to New-York, where she continued during John Hocknell's absence to England. She resided in the house of a respectable family, in Queen-street,* by the name of Smith, by whom Abraham, her husband, was employed as a journeyman in the blacksmith's business. She employed herself in washing and ironing for her support; and by her meekness, humility and amiable deportment, she gained the esteem and confidence of the family, and particularly of Smith's wife, who treated her with great kindness. By this woman she was afterwards solicited to take charge of her family affairs, with full liberty to manage therein according to her own discretion. But Mother Ann could not listen to any proposition which was incompatible with the gift and calling of God to her; she chose rather to endure poverty and sufferings, than to turn aside from her duty to God for the sake of any temporal advantages whatever.

During John Hocknell's absence to England, Mother Ann went several times up the river and visited those of the society who resided in the vicinity of Albany, and was occasionally visited by some of them; but still continued her residence in New-York. In the latter part of the summer or beginning of autumn, 1775, Abraham Stanley was visited with a severe sickness. To nurse and take care of him in this sickness, required Mother Ann's whole time and attention. This duty she performed with the utmost care and kindness, tho often at the expense of great sufferings on her own part. Their earnings now ceased, and they were reduced to extreme poverty.

Abraham at length recovered his health, so as to be able to walk the streets; and tho he never had been considered as a faithful and substantial believer; yet he had hitherto supported his credit and reputation, and maintained an outward conformity to his faith. But on regaining his health, and before he was fully able to return to his occupation, he began to associate with the wicked at public houses, and soon lost all sense and feeling of religion, and began to oppose Mother Ann's testimony in a very ungodly manner, and

* Now called Pearl-street.

urged her to renounce it, and live in sexual cohabitation, like the rest of the world. She replied, that she was willing to do any thing for him which justice, reason or humanity required; but she should never consent to violate her duty to God; and endeavored to prevail on him to return to his duty and be faithful.

But as Abraham was determined to pursue the course of the world, he continued his vicious practise, instead of returning to his occupation, and left Ann to provide for herself. At length he brought a lewd woman into the house to her, and declared that, unless she would consent to live in sexual cohabitation with him, he would take that woman for his wife. Ann replied with great firmness and resolution, that she would not do it if he should take her life as the consequence of her refusal. She also informed him, in plain terms, that she considered his cruel and abusive conduct as a very unjust requital for the uniform kindness and attention which she had paid to him, both in sickness and in health; and said she was still willing to take the most tender care of him, if he would return to his duty, and conduct himself as he ought to do, and urged him, in the most feeling manner, to return to the obedience of his faith; but all to no effect. He soon went off with the woman, to a distant part of the city, and it was reported that he was shortly after married to her. Thus ended the connection between Mother Ann and Abraham Stanley.

On the 25th of December, 1775, John Hocknell, with his family, arrived at Philadelphia, accompanied by John Partington and his family. From Philadelphia they proceeded to New-York, where they found Mother Ann. They continued in New-York till some time in February following, and then went on to Albany by land. After the opening of the river, in the spring, they went down to bring up their effects, and Mother Ann returned to Albany with them, and joined the rest of the society. Having taken up a lot of new land, their next object was to prepare for a settlement in the wilderness, by clearing their land, erecting suitable buildings and making other necessary provisions. This they accomplished in the course of the summer.

Thus, after passing through many trying scenes, Mother Ann and those who stood faithful with her, were collected together, and in the month of September, 1776, took up their residence in the woods of Watervliet, near Niskeyuna, about seven miles north-west of Albany. The place being then in a wilderness state, they began, with indefatigable zeal and industry, and through additional sufferings, to prepare the way for a permanent settlement, where they could enjoy their faith in peace, amid the tumults of the war in which the country was then involved. Here they waited with patience God's appointed time, for the opening of the testimony of that everlasting gospel, for which they had already suffered so much

nd which, above all other things, was the nearest to their hearts. Here they occupied themselves in improving their new settlement, nd providing for their comfortable subsistence; and here they eld their solemn meetings, and offered up their devotions to God, ull three years and a half, until the way was prepared for the ommencement of their testimony to the world, in the spring of he year 1780.

In the year 1779, Mother Ann often encouraged her companions, y telling them that the time was just at hand when many would ome and embrace the gospel, and directed them to make provisions or it, which they did according to their abilities. This same year, a emarkable revival of religion commenced in New-Lebanon and he adjacent towns, attended with many extraordinary circumstan- es of conviction, which greatly awakened the zeal of preachers nd people. Many were powerfully wrought upon, both in body nd spirit, and deeply convicted of their fallen state. Many also, ho had been professors of religion, began to see the false founda- ion on which they had hitherto built their hopes of salvation. Many were favored with gifts of visions and prophecies, by which ey saw and testified that the day of redemption was at hand, that he second coming of Christ was nigh, even at the door; and heir meetings resounded with loud cries to God for his kingdom o come.

Their meetings were also attended with great power of God, nd a strong testimony against all sin; and the various exercises nd gifts of the spirit among the people, manifested the most con- incing evidences of a real work of God. Some, under a deep onviction of their sins, were crying for mercy; others felt un- peakably happy in the joyful visions and revelations of the glory f the latter day, and of the commencement of the kingdom of hrist on earth, which was to put an end to wars and fightings, nd all manner of violence, restore peace on earth, make an end f sin, bring in everlasting righteousness, and gather the saints into ne harmonious communion.

The work was powerful and swift, but of short duration. In a w months their visions and prophecies ceased, the extraordinary ower of their testimony seemed to be at an end, and none of those ings of which they had testified, as yet appeared. In this situa- on they were filled with deep distress and anxiety of mind; yet ill retained their confidence in the near approach of Christ's ingdom, and continued their assemblies with earnest prayers, and xhortations, encouraging one another to maintain their faith and ope, to wait with patience, to pray and not faint.

This was the state of the people in the spring of 1780, when me of them providentially visited Mother Ann and her little fam- y, and were soon convinced that they were in the very work for

which they themselves had been so earnestly praying, and for which they had been looking and waiting with such ardent expectations. Attracted by the report of these, others were induced to visit them; and the fame of these strange people, who lived in this obscure corner in the wilderness, soon extended far and wide. Many resorted to see them, from New-Lebanon and the country round, and when they heard the new and living testimony, and saw the various and extraordinary operations of Divine Power among them, they were fully confirmed in the belief, that Christ had, in very deed, appeared again on earth. Many from various parts of the country, and of almost every denominaton, embraced the faith of the society.

Many of the new converts, as might be expected, were filled with great power and zeal; but for the want of experience and understanding, they were not able, at all times, to exercise their zeal according to the dictates of wisdom. Many times they exhibited a degree of wildness and enthusiasm in their conduct, which, to the beholders, appeared like the greatest inconsistency and delusion, and especially to such as trusted in the forms of religion, while they were ignorant of its internal power. To the natural man such views of a new and singular manifestation of religion, were very natural; especially as its light and testimony struck at the very root and foundation of the fallen nature of man.

These things, however, were viewed in a very different light by those who were spiritually minded. But if it sometimes happened that irregularities took place, which were inconsistent with the faith of the testimony, they were discountenanced by the leading characters of the society. The work was all new to those who embraced it, and the leaders being few in number, and the work extensive, irregularities could not always be foreseen nor prevented. And where the destruction of the old heavens, with all their false systems, and of the old earth with all its corruption and wickedness, was beginning to take place in the soul, in order to establish the new in the place thereof, it must necessarily produce a commotion in the human system, like the clashing of two opposite elements. These effects will always be viewed in their true light, by those who are divinely enlightened, and who are able to discern the true source from whence they proceed.

Such a remarkable event, however, could not take place without exciting great agitation in the public mind. Hence many conjectures were in circulation concerning these strange people, and especially concerning their female leader. By some she was strongly suspected of *witchcraft*, and the old accusation was in substance revived; "*She* casteth out devils by Beelzebub." But as it was a time of *wars and fightings*, (the country being then engaged in its revolutionary struggle,) and those who received the testimony, were

averse to war, advantage was taken of this circumstance to represent them as enemies to the country. Accordingly they were accused of maintaining a secret correspondence with the enemy, and the charge of treason was publicly alledged against them. In consequence of these accusations, which had no foundation, but in the enmity of a persecuting spirit, Mother Ann, and a number of the leading characters were, in the month of July following, imprisoned in Albany.*

Tho the charge of treason was the ostensible cause of this imprisonment; yet it appeared evident that the real object of their accusers was, to break up the society, and thereby suppress the growing testimony. But so far from effecting this object, the testimony had afterwards a more rapid and extensive circulation than before. For when it was once understood that an innocent people were actually thrown into prison, on account of their religion, the circumstance naturally excited great sympathy among the more considerate part of the community, and great inquiries were made concerning the religious tenets of a people who were judged deserving of such harsh treatment.

Hence they were visited by multitudes of people from various quarters, and from many miles distant; and every honest and candid enquirer was soon convinced, not only of the innocence of the people, but of the truth of their testimony. There were also many sensible men who expressed their disapprobation of these intolerant proceedings against an innocent people, for no other cause, in reality, than their religious faith and testimony, and especially at a time when the nation itself was contending for its civil and religious rights. And all who were seriously awakened to a feeling sense of their loss from God, and of their need of salvation, and who were willing to endure the cross of Christ, regardless of popular clamor and the enmity of persecutors, readily embraced the testimony.

Their enemies were highly offended when they saw their main object defeated by this success of the testimony. And as Mother Ann was the founder and principal leader of this *new sect*, which was "every where spoken against," they naturally concluded that, by separating her from her followers, they would soon be dispersed, and the society come to an end. Accordingly, about the middle of August, they sent her down the river, with a view to banish her to the British army, which was then in New-York. But not being able to accomplish their object, she was landed at Poughkeepsie, and imprisoned in the jail of that town. But notwithstanding all

* Nothing could be more unjust and unfounded than this charge Mother Ann, at the commencement of the war, and frequently afterwards, testified by the spirit of prophecy, that it would terminate in the separation of the colonies from the British government; that liberty of conscience would be established in this country; and that the way would be thus prepared for the building up of Christ's Kingdom in this favored land. She could not therefore act against her own testimony.

these endeavors to destroy the society and stop the progress of the testimony, it still continued to increase by a constant accession of numbers from various quarters.

About the 20th of December following, those who had been confined in Albany, were released without any trial; having been confined five months, without any shadow of evidence to justify their imprisonment. Being now released, they visited Mother Ann at Poughkeepsie, and through their intercession with Gov. Geo. Clinton, who had not before been made acquainted with these circumstances, she was released, about the last of December. Thus ended the only imprisonment that Mother Ann suffered in America; an imprisonment which was designed to suppress her influence, and check the progress of the society; but through the overruling hand of Divine Providence, it was the occasion of a far more extensive circulation of her testimony, and a greater increase of the society, than any event that had ever before taken place.

After Mother Ann and her companions were released from prison, they returned to Watervliet, where they spent the remainder of the winter and spring, and were constantly visited by those who had embraced the testimony, and also by many others from the surrounding country. And tho many came from motives of curiosity; yet no honest soul, who candidly examined the testimony, and viewed, without prejudice, the wonderful operations of the power of God which prevailed in their meetings, could go away without a full conviction that the work of God was among them. But they were often afflicted with mockers and scoffers, whose main object was to seek for evil, and seize upon every occasion to scandalize the work, and vilify the subjects of it. Such were ever ready to judge with an evil eye, and from the decisions of an evil heart, to fix the stamp of evil upon whatever they saw among the people. Hence arose those numerous evil reports which have been so industriously circulated, by reprobate characters, to the present day.

On the 31st of May, 1781, Mother Ann set out on a journey to Harvard, in the state of Massachusetts. In this journey she was accompanied by William Lee, James Whittaker, Samuel Fitch, Mary Partington and Margaret Leeland. In the course of her journey, she visited many who had before embraced her testimony, encouraging and confirming them in their faith by those extraordinary manifestations of the power of God which always attended her ministry; and tho the spirit of opposition manifested itself, more or less, wherever she went; yet numbers were added to the faith. She arrived in Harvard the latter part of June, where she was shortly visited by great numbers of the inhabitants, and by many others from various parts of the country. Many embraced her testimony, and, as is natural on such occasions, the spirit of

Antichrist was greatly alarmed at the danger to which he saw his kingdom exposed, through the prevailing influence of the testimony of truth.

Persecution, the usual engine of religious intolerance, was immediately set in motion; and no means were left untried to arrest the progress of the testimony. Every evil report and every wicked device, that falshood and malice could dictate, were called forth to calumniate and debase the character of Mother Ann and her companions, and render them odious in the eyes of the people, with a view to excite them to acts of persecution. The charges of being enemies and traitors to the country; of having fire arms and munitions of war concealed among them; of living in drunkenness and debauchery, and practising witchcraft and other base crimes, were continually alledged against them.

In consequence of these accusations, they suffered much personal abuse, and on several occasions, they were so shamefully and cruelly abused, particularly at Harvard and Petersham, that, to all human appearance, it seemed as tho nothing short of Divine Power could have preserved their lives. The people also, who embraced the testimony, often suffered a large share in these abuses; being scourged with whips, beaten with clubs, stoned, kicked and dragged about by their legs and arms, and sometimes by the hair of their heads, and driven from place to place, in the most cruel and abusive manner; so that many of them but narrowly escaped with their lives; and numbers carried through life, the scars and marks of abuse which they then received from their cruel and inhuman persecutors. Through all these trying scenes they were evidently protected and supported by the power and providence of God; so that notwithstanding many attempts were made upon the lives of the believers, yet no life was suffered to be taken.

But judgments appeared evidently to follow all the most active and violent of these persecutors. Some who were before rich and prosperous in their temporal circumstances, soon after these persecutions, met with some extraordinary reverses of fortune, lost all their property and came to beggary, and were finally reduced to the necessity of going to the very people whom they had before persecuted, to beg alms. Some came to sudden and untimely deaths; others became insolvent and left the country to avoid their creditors. Some who had before sustained a respectable character in society, soon after lost all their reputation, in consequence of drunkenness and other base practices; others ended their days by suicide. In short, these misfortunes were so general upon those who had acted a conspicuous part in these perescutions, that they occasioned the following general remark among the inhabitants; "These Shaker drivers are all coming to nothing."

These persecutions, however, like the imprisonment at Albany,

served only to accelerate the means of extending the testimon which greatly increased the number of believers. It may proper to remark here, that notwithstanding all the persecutio and imprisonments that Mother Ann, and the Elders with he suffered from time to time, both in England and America, and the accusations ever raised against them by the tongue of slande yet no charge against their moral characters was ever substant ted. The Cain-like enmity of their persecutors was evident directed against their religious faith, and the purity of their live which was a living testimony to condemn those abominations which their persecutors lived. "If they have called the mast "of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household

During the residence of Mother Ann and the Elders, in Harva they visited many places in that quarter, and passed through ma severe trials and sufferings for the testimony of the gospel; b were blessed, in their labors, with many powerful gifts of God, a succeeded in planting the word of God in the hearts of many. the course of their labors with the believers, they ministered mu divine instruction, enlightened the understandings of many w embraced the testimony, and taught them how to bear their cross how to overcome their evil propensities, and gain a final victo over the nature of evil in their own souls. In short, they we taught how to travel in the way of God, how to increase and gr in love and union, peace and harmony, and how to gain that abi ing treasure which was necessary to support them through all t trying scenes of this life, and fit them for the everlasting kingdo of Christ hereafter.

About the beginning of July, 1783, they left Harvard to retu to the westward. On their journey they visited Petersha Cheshire, Richmond, Hancock and Stockbridge, in Massachuset and New-Lebanon and Stephentown, in the state of New-Yo In all these places they were followed by great multitudes of peop had many powerful meetings, and suffered much persecution, p ticularly in New-Lebanon, where they were most shamefully a cruelly abused. On the 4th of September, they left New-Leban and returned to Watervliet, having been absent two years a three months. Here they were again visited by great numb from all parts of the country where the testimony had been rece ed; and here they continued their powerful meetings, where ma souls were awakened by the sound of the gospel, and felt the pu fying fire of Zion; and all who were faithful and honest-heart were instructed, strengthened and encouraged, according to th needs and circumstances, in all things, both spiritual and tempo

On the 21st of July, 1784, the society was called to sustai serious and affecting trial in the decease of Elder William L who had been a powerful support to Mother Ann, in the gr

eight of care which such a body of believers brought upon her. his event was the means of preparing the minds of the believers r a still heavier trial, which they sensibly felt that they must soon xperience, in the loss of the visible presence and protection of their arly beloved Mother, the thought of which seemed almost insup-rtable to many. Being herself sensible that her time was short, e often reminded the people of it, and often exhorted them to ithfulness and perseverance in the way of God. Having finish-l her work on earth, she was called to bid adieu to all terrestrial ings, and was released from her labors, her sorrows and her suf-rings, and calmly resignsd her soul to God, on the morning of the h of September following.

This solemn event was severely felt and deeply deplored by all r faithful children; but their present loss was greatly compensa-d by the faithful labors of Elder James Whittaker, who succeed-l her in the ministry, and who was henceforth called Father mes.

The society being now deprived of the visible presence and rotection of Mother Ann, Father James saw and felt, with many hers, the necessity of laboring for an increase of the substance of e gospel among the people, in order to maintain the testimony nd protect them from the snares of wickedness which surrounded em, and the flood of opposition which now seemed ready to burst upon them from every quarter. Mother Ann's decease being blicly known, it was generally and confidently believed by the orld around them, that the society would be dissolved, and the eople return to their former course of life; so that (as they often xpressed themselves) "the delusion would soon be at an end." ecording to this belief, every means which Satan could devise, as made use of, to seduce the believers from their duty, and turn eir minds from the faith.

But the foundation being laid by Jesus Christ, and established y the will of God, upon the rock of ages, it could not be over-rown by the agency of man nor the malice of devils. And tho umbers, from time to time, fell off, and lost their union and rela-on to the work of God; yet this did not destroy the testimony, or weaken the confidence of the faithful. For it has ever proved ue, as testified by Mother Ann, and the first witnesses of the ospel with her, that no truly faithful soul has ever been left with-ut the protection of God; because the faithfulness and obedience f such will always ensure God's protection. And it has proved qually true, according to the same testimony, that the unfaithful re like withered branches; tho they may hang on for a season, nd be sustained by the tree; yet when storms arise and the winds low, and there is a shaking among the green trees, then the dry ubs and branches must fall off; for they can hold on no longer.

The society having, through great labor and much tribulatio purged out many remaining corruptions, and gained an increasi power and victory over the fallen nature of the flesh, and havi attained to a greater degree of spiritual light and sensation, we able to discern and mark, more clearly, the distinction "betwee the precious and the vile," and to draw more closely, the line separation which was necessary to protect the people from t snares of sin. And all those who had been faithful and hone hearted, being now firmly established in the increasing work God, were led in their travel to see and feel the necessity of bei gathered into a more united body, for the benefit of greater prote tion, and a further increase of their spiritual travel. In the autu of 1785, was raised the first house for public worship ever built the Society. From this time the affairs of the Society began assume a more regular form and order.

During the ministration of Father James, he visited almo every place where the testimony of the gospel had been receive teaching, encouraging and strengthening the believers in their m holy faith. In this time they found a great increase in their fa and understanding, and in their power and victory over the natu of evil, and were gradually prepared for that gospel order a union, in things spiritual and temporal, which was afterwards tablished among them. Father James having laid the foundati for the establishment of order, and finished the work which w given him to do, departed this life at Enfield, in Connecticut, Ju 20th, 1787.

Father James was succeeded in the ministry by Joseph Mea am, who was a native of Enfield in Connecticut, born Februa 11th, 1740. He was a man of deep penetration and strong me tal powers; he had formerly been a Baptist preacher, and was leading character in the forementioned revival at New-Leban Lucy Wright, a woman greatly distinguished for her faithfulne wisdom and discretion, was also chosen and appointed as the fi leading character in the female line. She was a native of Pittsfie in Massachusetts, born February 5th, 1760. These two had be eminently useful during Father James's ministry, and had al supported him in protecting, strengthening and encouraging t people, and preparing them for the increasing work which was follow.

In the progressive manifestations of spiritual light which brou that increase to view, these two were established by the gift God, as spiritual parents in church relation, and first ministers gospel order. Under their ministration the people began to gat into a united body, and were gradually formed into church relati at New-Lebanon, and united their interest in one common sto so as to become one in all things, both spiritual and tempor "having all things common."

After the example of the church in this place, societies were formed in many other places where the gospel had been planted, and successively established upon the same foundation and principles of order and government, as branches of the Mother-church at New-Lebanon.

CHAPTER IV.

*Some further account of the life, character and ministry of Mother Ann Lee.**

Mother Ann Lee, in her personal appearance, was a woman rather below the common stature of woman; thick set, but straight and otherwise well proportioned and regular in form and features. Her complexion was light and fair, and her eyes were blue, but keen and penetrating; her countenance was mild and expressive, but grave and solemn. Her natural constitution was sound, strong and healthy. Her manners were plain, simple and easy; yet she possessed a certain dignity of appearance that inspired confidence and commanded respect. By many of the world, who saw her without prejudice, she was called beautiful; and to her faithful children, she appeared to possess a degree of dignified beauty and heavenly love, which they had never before discovered among mortals.

She possessed remarkable powers and faculties of mind in nature, which were greatly enlarged and strengthened by the gift of God. At times, when under the power and operation of the Holy Ghost, her countenance shone with the glory of God, and her form and actions appeared divinely beautiful and very angelic. The power and influence of her spirit, at such times, was great beyond description; and no one was able to gainsay or resist the authority by which she spoke.

Tho her words were few, yet they always seemed adapted to the occasion, and it did not appear that she ever spoke in vain. Her whole soul appeared to be always engaged in the work of God, and the Spirit of God seemed to breathe through all her words and actions. She inspired into the hearts of her faithful children the greatest fear of God, and excited their highest admiration, love and respect. But in reproving sin and sinners, the power of her spirit seemed irresistible, and often struck terror into the souls of every one present. Her admonitions were sharp, powerful and penetrating; yet while she struck at that which was evil, she seemed always anxious to separate and preserve the good.

* Tho the mere description of Mother Ann's person and manners cannot perpetuate the memory of her heavenly virtues; yet as some very distorted representations of both have been published to the world by those who never saw her face, and who were indebted to her most malicious enemies for their disingenuous descriptions, we cannot therefore be excused in passing them over in silence.

Her soul was frequently inspired with such divine efficacy, that with a single word or touch of her hand, she would often raise individuals, and many times, with a few words, a whole assembly, from a state of deep distress and tribulation of soul, to a state of great heavenly joy and comfort. Again, she has often ministered, in a few words, to a large assembly, such a measure of the power of conviction and repentance, that in a few minutes the floor has been wet with tears.

She possessed a degree of discernment and penetration which nothing short of Divine Wisdom could inspire. In her labors with young believers, she seemed to penetrate the inmost recesses of their souls, and would often lay open the state of their minds more clearly than they were able to do of themselves. It often seemed that not a soul near her could hide the most secret feelings from her; and in whatever she asserted for truth, tho at the time ever so doubtful to others, she was never known to be in the least mistaken.

Her mind rose superior to the ordinary passions of human nature, and her great labor seemed to be, to subdue those passions in her followers, and to inspire their souls with divine and heavenly affections. During the whole period of her ministry, she was never known to be in the least degree ruffled, or out of temper with any one; but even in the severest reproof, she appeared to feel unbounded charity for those she reproved, and anxious only to put away the evil and cherish the good.

Tho Mother Ann, in the course of her ministry, passed through many scenes of sorrow and tribulation of soul; yet she was often filled with heavenly joy and comfort. When she rejoiced under the influence of Divine Power, her joy seemed far above all earthly joys; the heavenly melody of her voice, in the gift of divine songs, was beyond description; and to those around her, it seemed as if her whole soul was in harmony with the angelic host, rejoicing in the mansions of glory. When she wept, it appeared as tho every feeling person was constrained to weep with her. She was often in tears and supplication before God; and such was the divine sympathy of her weeping soul, as often to melt the feelings of a whole assembly into tears with her; and it seemed at such times as tho the very sound of her voice was enough to cause the most adamantean heart to break and yield before God. In times of tribulation she was often heard to say, "There is no sorrow like my sorrow." It appeared that every feeling and faculty of her soul and body was wholly devoted to the will of God in all things. She often said, "Once I served God through fear; but now I serve "him through love."

So great was her sense of the lost state of mankind, and so ardent her desire for their deliverance from the bondage of sin, and

from the awful state of misery which she clearly foresaw awaited sinners, that she was often in the deepest agony of soul, and the most fervent cries to God for their salvation. In expressing her compassionate feelings to the believers, on this subject, she often wept like a child under the most excessive sorrow.

Mother Ann, in her ordinary manners and deportment, was meek, simple and harmless, very just, upright and conscientious in all her conduct, and very careful to wrong no one in any manner whatever, and she was always ready to acknowledge an act of kindness from any person, even from her most inveterate enemies. She often manifested, with great humility and thankfulness, her continual dependence on the gift of God, and humbly acknowledged his goodness and mercy to her under all her trials and sufferings, and frequently expressed her thankfulness for the blessings she received. She was far from assuming to herself any power or authority whatever; but that which was given her of God, she felt herself bound to exercise in strict obedience to his Divine Will. When any of the believers kneeled before her, she would often say, "Dont kneel to me, but kneel to God; I am but your fellow servant." She often kneeled herself, when any one kneeled before her.

In her daily deportment she manifested the most distinguishing marks of humiliation. She frequently waited on those who came to see her, with the same attention and assiduity as tho she had been a mere servant in the family. When people came who were fatigued with their journey, who were feeble, wet or cold, she often used to wait upon them with the greatest kindness, and with her own hands, make all necessary provision for their comfort. Sometimes, while waiting upon them, she would say, 'I am among you as one that serveth." When great numbers of people were collected and assembled at the table, she often waited upon them with all the attention of a dutiful and faithful servant.

She never repined at poverty, nor desired delicious fare for herself; but always accommodated herself to her circumstances, however poor or scanty her provisions; and would readily economize in such a manner as to render the poorest fare comfortable, and make a little suffice. When occasion required, she would cheerfully make her meal on the fragments left by others, and say, 'This is good enough for me; for it is the blessing of God, and must not be lost." She many times took such occasions, both at home and abroad, to teach the people prudence and economy, and was often heard to speak to them after this manner: "You 'must be prudent and saving of every good thing that God blesses you with; so that you may have wherewith to give to them 'that stand in need. You cannot make a spear of grass nor a 'kernel of grain grow, if you knew you must die for the want of

"it. It is by the blessing of God that these things come: there
"fore you ought not to waste the least thing."

Mother Ann was very remarkable, not only for her humility
charity and zeal to do good; but also for her temperance, sobriety
industry, prudence and good economy. Being herself wholly de
voted to the cause of God, she was ever faithful in her endeavors
both by precept and example, to plant the same good qualification
in her followers; so that in all things, she was a pattern of godli
ness, and showed herself to be a Mother indeed, in every good
word and work.

In her labors and instructions for the increase of the gospe
among the believers, she spared no time nor pains; but seeme
willing at all times to spend her strength and her life for the ad
vancement of the work of God. She often used to say to the be
lievers who visited her, and were about to return home, "Th
"gospel is the greatest treasure that souls can possess; go hom
"and be faithful; put your hands to work, and give your heart
"to God. Beware of covetousness, which is as the sin of witch
"craft; if you have any thing to spare, give it to the poor." He
love and charity seemed boundless, always ready to succor th
afflicted, and minister to the wants of the needy. She often sai
to those in comfortable circumstances, "How many poor crea
"tures there are in the world who suffer with hunger and cold
"and here you have enough! How thankful you ought to be t
"God for his tender mercies towards you!"

Mother Ann often called the attention of the believers to faith
fulness in the care and management of their temporal concerns
She frequently enjoined it upon them as a necessary duty, to b
industrious in business; to be neat and cleanly, and observe goo
economy; to be prudent and saving, and let nothing be lost throug
carelessness or neglect; *to use the things of this world as no
abusing them*: to avoid equally covetousness and prodigality; t
be kind and charitable to the poor, and to keep clear of debt
These things were strictly enjoined upon the believers, from tim
to time, as matters of importance to secure a spiritual blessing
For it was often testified by Mother Ann, and proved by the ex
perience of many, that those who were unfaithful in tempora
things, could not find the blessing and protection of God in thei
spiritual travel: hence a faithful and wise improvement of thei
time and talents, in the things of time, was essentially necessary i
order to inherit the true riches.

In the spring of 1783, while Mother Ann was at Ashfield, i
Massachusetts, where many believers had collected from a distance
and having had considerable opportunity to be taught and instru
ted in the way of God, they were about to return home. In tak
ing leave of them, Mother Ann spoke to the brethren as follows

"It is now spring of the year, and you have all had the privilege "of being taught the way of God; and now you may all go home "and be faithful with your hands. Every faithful man will go "forth and put up his fences in season, and will plough his ground "in season, and put his crops into the ground in season; and such "a man may with confidence look for a blessing. But the sloth-"ful and indolent will say, *to-morrow will do as well*, and *to-mor-"row will do as well*. Such a man never finds a blessing; if he "has any thing it is afterwards, and there seems to be no blessing "in it. Just so he is in spiritual things; he will be slothful in "the work of God, and he will reap his reward. He that is un-"faithful in the unrighteous mammon, how can he be trusted with "the true riches?"*

In addressing a certain sister who was the mother of a family, and had considerable charge upon her, Mother Ann spoke thus; "Be faithful to keep the gospel; be neat and industrious; keep "your family's clothes clean and decent; see that your house is "kept clean; and your victuals prepared in good order; that "when the brethren come home from their hard work, they can "bless you, and eat their food with thankfulness, without mur-"muring, and be able to worship God in the beauty of holiness. "Watch and be careful; don't speak harsh, nor cast reflections "upon them; but let your words be few and seasoned with grace."

The mother of a large and respectable family, who had all embraced the testimony, asked Mother Ann's counsel concerning some superfluities which her family had in possession; such as gold necklaces, jewels, rings, silver buckles, and other ornaments of the kind, and desired to know what she should do with them. Mother Ann replied, "You may let the moles and bats have "them,† that is, the children of this world: for they set their "hearts upon such things; but the people of God do not want "them." She then added, "You ought to dress yourself in mod-"est apparel, such as becomes the people of God, and teach your "family to do likewise. You ought to be industrious and prudent, "and not live a sumptuous and gluttonous life; but labor for a "meek and quiet spirit, and see that your family is kept decent "and regular in all their goings forth, that others may see your "example of faith and good works, and acknowledge the work "of God in your family."

Again: in addressing the same sister, together with a number of others who were in good temporal circumstances, she said, "You must remember the poor and needy, the widow and the "fatherless; and deal out your bread to the hungry and your "clothes to the naked. Your natures will say, They may work "and get these things for themselves; but Christ said, *Give to*

* See Luke xvi. 11. † Isaiah ii. 20.

" *him that asketh.* You must put away your covetousness, your
" lust and your filthiness, and be prepared for the increase of the
" gospel: for the time will come when this gospel will be preached
" to all nations, and many will flock to Zion to hear the word of
" the Lord."

In answer to a certain sister who spoke to her concerning a poor woman that had applied to her for help, she said, " Remember the cries of those who are in need and trouble; that when you are in trouble, God may hear your cries."

As Mother Ann was ever attentive to the protection and welfare of all her children, whatever their age, condition or circumstances, she often manifested her care and concern for the youth and children, and frequently counselled and instructed believing parents concerning their children, and enjoined it upon them to bring them up in the fear of God and teach them their duty. She often spoke to the youth and children herself, and counselled them to be faithful and obedient to their parents; to be good children, and never sin against God by giving way to any wickedness.

In the spring of 1781, while a large collection of believers were assembled at Watervliet, Mother Ann, in addressing them, endeavored to show them the necessity of becoming like little children, in order to gain an inheritance in the kingdom of God, and in her discourse, spoke particularly concerning little children. " Little children," said she, " are nearer to the Kingdom of Heaven than those of riper age. Christ took little children in his arms and blessed them, and said, *Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.* Little children are simple and innocent; they should be brought up so, and they ought never to be brought out of it. If they were brought up in simplicity, they would receive good as easy as they would evil. God at first created the soul pure and innocent; and when souls are redeemed from their loss, they will be restored to God, and will again be pure and innocent."

When she was at Samuel Fitch's, in Richmond, (Massachusetts) where she was visited by many of the believers, she spoke to a number of the sisters who were parents, concerning children, and endeavored to impress upon their minds their responsibility for their children, whom they had been instrumental in bringing into the world. She said, " It needs great wisdom to bring up children; and if they are rightly taught, they will grow up in the way of God. You ought not to cross your children unnecessarily: for it makes them illnatured; and little children do not know how to govern their natures. You ought not to blame them for every little fault or childish notion; but when they are disobedient, then let them feel your severity, and let your word be a law to them. But you ought never to speak to your children in a passion; for if you do, you will put devils into them."

Being at Elijah Wilds's, in Shirley, Mother Ann felt a particular impression to examine the children and search out evil among them, and soon found that thay had idols and foolish toys in their possession. She admonished their parents for indulging their children in these things, and testified that such things would shut out the gift of God from their souls, and that if children were carefully kept from such foolish playthings, and suitably instructed by their parents, they would abound in the gifts of God, and grow up in the gospel. "When I was a child," said she, "my mind was taken up with the things of God, so that I saw heavenly visions, instead of trifling toys."

Shortly before Mother Ann's imprisonment in Albany, a number of young people came to see her, who had lately embraced the testimony with their parents. Having tarried several days, and seen and felt the great power of God, and received much good instruction, and being about to take their leave, she spoke to them as follows:

"When you return home, you must be diligent with your hands; for godliness does not lead to idleness. The devil tempts others; but an idle person tempts the devil. When you are at work, doing your duty in the gift of God, the devil can have no power over you; because then there is no room for temptations. You must be obedient to your parents. Children should obey their parents: for this is right; and the younger should submit to the elder. You must come up to the requirement of the law. Christ did not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it; and you must do the same. Arm yourselves with meekness and patience. If you improve in one talent, God will give you more. Go home and be obedient; this is the way I have found salvation, and you must find it in the same way; *by being obedient.*"

A certain youth came one day to Mother Ann, with some peach and plumb stones in his hand, and asked her if he might plant them. "Yea," replied she, "do all your work as tho you had a thousand years to live, and as you would if you knew you must die to-morrow."

A young man who had but lately set out to take up his cross, having been overcome with a spirit of jealousy and false judging, and being convicted of his wrong, came and confessed it before Mother Ann. After kindly admonishing him to beware of such a spirit in future, she said, "Creatures see and judge according to the state they are in, and according to the influence they are under. When their senses are darkened by the flesh, and their minds are under the influence of an evil spirit, they see and judge according to the dictates of that evil spirit; but when that fleshly sense is purged away, and they are under the influence of the spirit of Christ, then they can see and judge according to truth."

While she was at Ashfield, there came a man to see her who was in trouble of mind; and feeling a deep sense of his own evil nature, he said to her, "Mother, I am full of evil." She turned her eyes upon him, and after a momentary pause, replied, "Nay, "you are not *full* of evil: for if you were *full of evil*, there could "be no room in you to receive any *good*. You have indeed a "great deal of evil in you; but this conviction that you feel is "*good*."

Being visited one day by some men of note, whose curiosity had led them to see and converse with her, and after answering their questions, and relating some of her religious experience and sufferings, she concluded her discourse to them in these words; "I was "once as you are; I had feet, but they walked in forbidden paths; "I had hands, but they handled unclean things; I had eyes, but "they saw nothing of God aright. But now my eyes see, my ears "hear, and my hands handle the word of life."

In reproving and condemning sin, and all manner of evil, in feelings, words and actions, the power of Mother Ann's testimony was beyond description. As nothing appeared to bring such excessive sufferings and tribulation of soul upon her as sin among believers; so the evident manifestation of the power of God, through her, in reproving it, was often so extraordinary as to cause the most stubborn and stout-hearted to shake and tremble in her presence, like a leaf shaken with the wind.

In the autumn of 1783, when many believers were assembled at Watervliet, some individuals among them, having been overcome with hard feelings, which brought distress of soul upon Mother Ann, she came into the room under a solemn weight of the power of God, and after looking round upon the assembly, she spoke with great power as follows: "Hear ye my words, you that have hard "feelings one against another, and yet think to keep the way of "God! You are awfully mistaken! You cannot prosper! The "you may hang on for a while, yet you will certainly fall off "like withered branches; and when you drop into hell, these hard "feelings will be like devouring worms to torment you! Remember my words! You can never enter the Kingdom of God with "hardness against any one: for God is love; and if you love God "you will love one another."

At another time there came two women who were at strife with each other; each one venting, in bitter words, her hard feelings against the other, and each one justifying herself and condemning the other. On hearing this, Mother Ann reproved them and said "You are wicked women! You are both in the wrong. Humble "yourselves before God, and put away your wrongs, or you can "never be saved; and instead of your hard feelings, make con "fession to each other: for God will not accept you in any other

way; he will not love you, except you love one another." These words were spoken with such great power of God, that the women were struck with amazement, and falling upon their knees, both confessed themselves in the wrong; and taking each other by the hand, they embraced one another with such affectionate expressions of love and friendship, that even the bye-standers seemed much affected at the scene.

Mother Ann having, on a particular occasion, reproved a certain sister, said to her, "You may always remember that the reproof of a friend is better than the kiss of an enemy." To another sister whom she had reproved, she said, "When I reprove you, it is to bring your soul nearer to my soul, and nearer to God."

The doctrine of confessing every secret sin, one by one, before the witnesses of God, was uniformly and plainly taught by Mother Ann, from the beginning of her ministry. Her labors in this particular, were often attended with such mighty power of God, and such sharp and piercing testimony, that few who heard it were able to resist its convicting power. Many were so powerfully wrought upon, that they could not refrain from crying out and confessing their sins on the spot. Others whose feelings were more bound by the fear of the cross, could find no rest, day nor night, from the tormenting weight of their sins, till they had honestly confessed them before some witness of God, appointed for that purpose. And every one who was honest and faithful in that important work, soon experienced the forgiving power of God, and felt an inward evidence of union and relation to the Kingdom of Heaven.

After Mother Ann arrived in Harvard, in the summer of 1781, she was visited by many people who had heard of her from common report; and after hearing Christ preached in his true and sinless character, and the loss of man laid open, and its real nature exposed to view, and the only possible way for souls to find redemption from that loss, they were convinced that Christ had come, in very deed, without sin unto salvation. She then addressed them as follows:

"The first step of obedience that any of you can take, is to confess your sins to God before his witnesses. Herein Christ is to be found as a Savior and forgiver of sins, and no where else: for herein is contained the promise of God; but in no other way. It is the heart which God looks at: the heart with its hidden abominations covered and concealed from the witnesses of Christ, becomes like a cage of unclean birds, and never can be cleansed short of a full and free confession. They that honestly confess all their sins, with a full determination to forsake them forever, will find strength of God to forsake them; and in taking up their

"crosses against every known sin, and following Christ in the reg
"generation, in that life of obedience, they will be clothed with the
"righteousness of Christ, and become the sons and daughters of
"God, being heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ."*

To those who came to confess their sins to her, she said, "If
"you confess your sins, you must confess them to God: we are
"but his witnesses." To such as asked her forgiveness, she used
to say, "I can freely forgive you, and I pray God to forgive you
"It is God that forgives sins; I am but your fellow servant."

Mother Ann was greatly blessed with heavenly visions, prophe
cies and divine revelations; and thus, by the operation of the
Spirit of Christ, in her, she was able to reveal the mind and will
of God to the people, and to administer a greater measure of di-
vine light and purifying power than had been given to any people
since the fall of man; but she uniformly acknowledged the power
and work to be of Christ.† To relate the numerous instances of
those extraordinary manifestations of God which, from time to time
she revealed to her people, and of the truth of which she gave the
most incontestable evidence, would far exceed the proposed limits
of this work. But in justice to the cause of truth, we think it pro-
per to state a few instances of her prophetic testimony, which may
not be unacceptable to the candid reader, especially as some of
them have since been fully realized.

In addressing an assembly of believers at Watervliet, shortly
after her return from Poughkeepsie, she spoke as follows: "You
"are called in relation to all the rest of mankind; and through your
"faith and obedience, they must receive the gospel. Pain and suf
"ferings will never cease in the church until all souls have heard the
"gospel of salvation: for this gospel will be freely offered to all souls
"and will be a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. The
"increase of the gospel, at the first, will be small; but the time will
"come when souls will embrace it by hundreds and by thousands
"for this testimony will overcome all nations; it will increase till
"the covering is taken off;‡ then mankind will see the rottenness
"of Antichrist's foundation; then those souls that are bound in
"their sins, will call to the rocks and to the mountains to cover
"them. But the saints will never be overcome again by the beast
"ly power of Antichrist. The work of God, in this day, is an
"inward, spiritual work; it is not so great, in outward appearance
"as it was in past dispensations; and therefore souls must be very
"cautious how they treat this gospel: for such as finally reject
"this testimony, will not have another day."

* See 1. John i 9.

† The foundation of the gospel was laid in Jesus Christ, who was the chief corner stone and the work of salvation can never be more perfect in any person than it was in him: for in all things he hath the preeminence But the fulness of his work was not then made manifest to the body; therefore, in this last dispensation, the purifying work of the gospel is more effectual in the body at large, than it was in the day of Christ's first appearing.

‡ See Isa. xxv 7.

At another time she spoke to a number of believers as follows: "Some of you think that you will yet subdue and overcome the nations of the earth; but you are mistaken: they have that work to do themselves. They will fight and devour and dash each other to pieces, until they become so humbled as to be willing to receive the gospel." Again she spoke with great power and energy of spirit, and said, "They will build up; but God will pull down! they will build up; but God will pull down, until they can build no more! but you will have nothing to do with it."

Being one day in deep tribulation of soul, she wept with fervent cries to God, in consideration of the scattered state of believers. But," said she, "the time will come when the church will be gathered into order; but not till after my decease." She also said, "After my departure there will come grievous wolves, who will destroy many of the flock." Again she said, "The wisdom and knowledge and light of God will increase in the church until Zion shall travel to her full glory." Afterwards she said, "It will not be my lot, nor the lot of any that came with me from England, to gather and build up the church; but it will be the lot of Joseph Meacham and others." Again she said, "Joseph Meacham is my first-born son in America; he will gather the church into order; but I shall not live to see it."

One day, as she was walking the floor under great power of God, and singing a very melodious song by divine inspiration, her mind apparently abstracted from all the objects which surrounded her, she suddenly stopped, and turning to the people in the room, he said, "I feel a special gift of God; I feel the power of God running all over me." And extending her hand towards the southwest, she added, "The next opening of the gospel will be in the southwest; it will be at a great distance, and there will be a great work of God." And turning to Eliphalet Slosson, she said, "You may live to see it; but I shall not." This prophecy she repeated at different times, and in different places, of which numbers now living can bear witness. These predictions have been amply fulfilled.

As Mother Ann was one day viewing an apple tree in full blossom, she said, "How beautiful this tree looks now! But some of the apples will soon fall off; some will hold on longer; some will hold on till they are full half grown, and then fall off; and some will get ripe. So it is with souls that set out in the way of God. Many will set out very fair, and soon fall away; some will go further, and then fall off; some will go still further, and then fall; and some will go through."*

Near the close of Mother Ann's labors in this world, a number

* This natural similitude shows not what necessarily must take place where the seed of the gospel is sown, but what actually does take place, and is similar to Christ's parable of the sower.

of young people from New-Lebanon, came to Watervliet to se
her. Having had considerable opportunity of instruction in th
things of God, before they took their leave of her, to return hom
she addressed them as follows:

"I have taught you the way of God; you must keep it. I a
"but one; I do my work; you must do yours. I wish you kne
"your day and your privilege; you have a privilege which man
"souls have desired and could not obtain. You are young, an
"you have a privilege to take up your crosses in the prime of you
"activity. If you take up your crosses against the lust of th
"flesh, while you have power to please yourselves, you offer
"God the first fruits of your lives; and there is a glorious crow
"for all who take up their crosses against the flesh in this world
"such souls will receive that honor and crown of glory which n
"other souls can ever obtain. All souls will have a privilege
"this gospel, either in this world or in the world of spirits; b
"those that have the offer of the gospel in this world, if they fina
"ly reject it, they will never have another day.* You have yo
"day now; you can travel out of your loss by obedience, by tak
"ing up the same cross that Christ did; but souls in the world
"spirits have to travel through sufferings, passing from prison
"prison, until they find the mercy of God. But those who volu
"tarily take up their crosses in this world, and faithfully endu
"to the end, will be more bright and glorious than any others
"they will be *kings and priests unto God.*"

After the decease of Elder William Lee, who had been an ab
support to Mother Ann, in the great weight of care and burde
which such a body of believers brought upon her, she began vis
bly to decline in bodily strength; and knowing that her work
earth was nearly at a close, she endeavored to prepare the min
of the believers for the event. She repeatedly told them that s
was about to leave them, and often warned them to be faithf
She said, "Brother William is gone, and it will soon be said of n
"that I am gone too." She was continually visited by believe
from a distance, and while her strength remained, she continued
counsel and encourage them to faithfulness in the way of Go
telling them that her time was short, and they must keep the w
of God for themselves.

About three days before her decease, Job Bishop† came to W
tervliet, and feeling a great desire to see her once more in the bod
she sent for him into her room. She was sitting in her chair; h
bodily strength was far exhausted; but her mind was sound, a

* Meaning that they will never have another dispensation of the gospel after death;
cause this being the last dispensation of God's grace to man, those who finally reject al
offers, can have no more.

† A faithful young believer and laborer among the people, who is now the first-elder
father of the church in New Hampshire.

ier spirit firm and solid; but calm and serene. She spoke to him and said, "I shall soon be taken out of this body; but the gospel "will never be taken away from you, if you are faithful. Be not "discouraged, nor cast down: for God will not leave his people "without a leader. Elder James and Elder Joseph will be left, "and there will be a great increase of the gifts of God to all who "are faithful and obedient. Now you are a young man, and have "received many blessed gifts of God; go, be faithful and zealous; "and when you travel to your lot in the church, all these beautiful "gifts will be yours." Job wept, and expressed his sorrowful feelings in parting with her, never expecting to see her any more in this world. "Be of good comfort," said she; "cleave to Elder "Joseph; he will be your father, and will take care of you."

Thus she continued, as long as her strength remained, to exhort and comfort all who came to see her. She discovered no anxiety for herself; her principle concern seemed to be to encourage her children to persevere in the way of God, to comfort them in their sorrow, and reconcile them to her departure. And altho her bodily sufferings were great; yet she appeared calm, peaceable and comfortable in spirit, and her usual patience and fortitude appeared conspicuous to the end. She continually grew weaker in body until the 8th of September, between twelve and one o'clock in the morning, when she breathed her last, without a struggle or a groan. Before her departure, she repeatedly told those about her that she was going home. Just before she expired, she said, "I see brother William coming in a glorious chariot to take me home." Elder John Hocknell, who was greatly gifted in visions, testified that when the breath left her body, he saw in vision a golden chariot, drawn by four white horses, which received and wafted her soul out of his sight.*

* The visions, prophecies and revelations mentioned in this work, will perhaps be rejected by an unbelieving world, as the effects of enthusiasm, superstition and fanaticism. But tho there may be many, even among the professors of christianity, who, generally speaking, have no faith in such manifestations beyond the comprehension of their natural senses and daily experience; yet this cannot alter the truth, nor disannul facts. Therefore, let the sneering unbeliever reflect that the same charge will equally apply to the prophets and saints of all preceding dispensations, who abounded in those gifts. Elijah went up in a fiery chariot, and a cloud received Jesus out of sight. The prophets saw many wonderful visions, and received many revelations, and by divine inspiration, delivered many remarkable prophecies of future events; and who has ever assured man that those who walk in the Spirit of Christ, and enjoy communion with the heavenly world, shall not be able to see heavenly visions, and discern spiritual things, and be blessed with spiritual understanding, in this day, as well as under former dispensations? It is the darkness of a fallen nature which obscures the light of the soul, and the veil of the flesh which shuts celestial scenes from the view of man; but the Spirit of God is, "the same yesterday, to-day and forever."

Thus departed from this mortal stage, that extraordinary female who was chosen of God to commence, in this latter day, the regeneration of a lost world; in whom Christ, in very deed, appeared the second time without sin unto salvation; whose life of righteousness excited against her the enmity of the wicked, and against whose character the envenomed tongue of slander has never ceased to pour forth its calumnies even to this day. In her the suffering of Christ appeared conspicuous; in her the righteousness of Christ was clearly manifested to all her faithful followers. In her Christ was revealed the Lord from Heaven, a quickening Spirit; in her was renewed his example of perfect obedience to the will of his heavenly Father; in her was revived the way of life and salvation by the cross, and she plainly taught the impossibility of obtaining it in any other way. In her was first wrought the complete redemption of the female; and through her ministration a way was opened for the restoration of the female character to its proper lot and dignity, from which it had been degraded by the transgression of the first woman.

CHAPTER V.

A short account of the life and character of Elder William Lee

William Lee was the fourth son of John Lee, and the brother of Mother Ann Lee. He was born in the town of Manchester, in England, in 1740, and was brought up in the occupation of a blacksmith by his father. He was married, and had one son; and was afterwards an officer of horse in the king's royal guard, belonging to a volunteer regiment called the *Oxford Blues*.

In his person he was of a commanding figure, rather above middling height, thick set, large limbs and strong body. His hair was of a light chesnut brown, his eyes blue, his countenance open and very bold, calculated to inspire confidence and respect. He possessed a strong and robust constitution; his voice was strong clear and sonorous; in short he was very remarkable for his strength, both of body and mind. In his faith he was firm, zealous and powerful. He feared not the face of man; but was faithful, laborious and persevering in the cause of God. In times of mobs and persecutions he was always undaunted, and often testified against the wickedness of his persecutors with a boldness and confidence which clearly evinced that he was a stranger to the fear of man.

Concerning his first embracing the testimony of the gospel, he gave the following account of himself. That he was a proud haughty young man, fond of dress and gaiety, and ambitious of honor and fame: that in the midst of his pursuit of worldly glory

he fell under deep conviction of sin. In this state of mind he went to see his sister Ann, who was then a member of the society under the ministry of James and Jane Wardley. When he arrived at his sister's, being very gaily dressed, she reproved him for his pride, showed him his dangerous situation, and greatly increased his convictions. He immediately threw off his ruffles and his silks, and put his hands to work and his heart to God, and faithfully labored to find the forgiveness of his sins and acceptance with God.

Concerning some of his religious exercises, in the first of his faith, he gave the following account. "Before I confessed my 'sins, I felt great tribulation; and after I had confessed them, I 'cried to God, day and night, till I heard an audible voice from 'Heaven, saying, *William thy sins are forgiven.*" He further said, "Mother's testimony was so awakening to my soul, that 'when I was at work over my anvil, I sometimes felt so weary 'that I would have given any thing if I could have set down and 'rested myself upon my anvil one minute; but I durst not; for I 'felt my soul, as it were, upon the point of a needle, and therefore kept my hands to work, and my soul in continual labor to 'God. And often when I went to my meals, I felt so unworthy 'to put any of the creation of God into my mouth, that I could 'not eat, but wept and went back to my work again."

He further stated, that he frequented the society of James and Jane Wardley; and when he was in tribulation, he sometimes opened his trials and feelings to them, and was encouraged by them; but instead of crying to God for victory over the evil which caused his tribulation, he suffered himself to rest upon their encouragement, which gave him some releasement of mind. But when he returned to his sister again, she would often spoil his comfort by shewing him his real situation, which would again plunge him into deeper tribulation than he had felt before. This made him cry earnestly to God, till he gained releasement for himself, according to her counsel.

When Mother Ann received the revelation of God against the flesh, William united with her, and zealously stood forth in her defence against her persecutors. This raised the enmity of his neighbors and acquaintances, who opposed and persecuted him. He frequently suffered abuse from mobs and persecutors, and some of the scars which he received from the wicked, in consequence of his faith and testimony, he carried with him through life. He once received a stroke upon his head, from a mob, with an iron fire-hook, which fractured his scull; he fell apparently dead, and bled profusely. But the wicked, with all their abuses, were never able to overcome his faith, nor suppress his testimony.

He passed through many scenes of suffering, both of body and

soul, and seemed destined, through the whole course of his faith to suffer for the gospel's sake. Tho in his creation he was a ma of remarkable strength of body, as well as of fortitude of mind yet such was often the degree of his sufferings, that he has been in a short time, reduced to the weakness of a child, through exces of sufferings. But he was often suddenly released by the powe of God, and often had his soul instantly filled with heavenly song of joy and comfort. It is asserted by those who were intimatel acquainted with him during the whole period of his ministry i America, that he was truly, "a man of sorrows and acquainte with grief;" that he was indeed an apostle in sufferings; and tha at times, when he was released from sufferings, he was often fille with such fulness of heavenly joy, that his soul seemed to be i the mansions of glory.

Elder William's soul was greatly enriched with the gifts of Goo in visions, revelations, and other divine manifestations; and h abounded in mercy, love and charity; but possessed a very pow erful spirit, and maintained a swift testimony against all sin. Th he seldom spoke much in public; yet he was eminently useful i teaching, encouraging and strengthening the believers under a their trials and difficulties. He was remarkable for tenderne of heart, and would often weep like a child, for the sufferings an afflictions of God's people. In tears he often expressed his grea thankfulness for the gospel, and for the gifts and blessings of Goo both in things spiritual and temporal. So feelingly alive was h soul to the goodnes and mercy of God, even for the smallest ben fits, that he has been observed, when going to wash himself, t weep and say, "I thank Heaven for this water; for it is the bles "ing of Heaven."

Many times when he sat down to his meals, he would expre his thankfulness, with tears in his eyes, for the goodness of God providing these temporal blessings for the comfort and support life. One day at Ashfield, as he was going to sit down to th table with a number of young believers, he spoke and said, "I fe "that you are not so thankful as you ought to be, for the goo "things that God provides for you; but you will eat and drin "of these precious things, and not consider from whence the "come. The sin of ingratitude is a great sin; see that you a "not guilty of it. I often eat my food with thankfulness and tear "every mouthful I eat." They sat down, and Elder William tears flowed, with frequent expressions of thankfulness to Go during the whole time they were eating."

Tho Elder William possessed great kindness and charity, an such flows of heavenly love, that he never failed to gain the lo and affections of every faithful believer; yet in reproving si such was the power of God in him, that his very spirit seemed lik

a two-edged sword against sin, and every one that had any feeling sense of sin at such times, could not but tremble at the sound of his voice. Sometimes he used to reprove the believers for walking about in a careless, thoughtless manner, as tho they did not feel the fear of God, and would say to them, "You ought to pass "by each other like angels; but instead of that, you appear to me "more like the troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. "But I can but be sorry for you; and it feels to me as if there were "no sorrow like my sorrow."

In delivering a short and very powerful testimony against sin, to an assembly of believers at Petersham, in which he admonished the people to a faithful and honest confession of their sins, he concluded in these words; "Altho we rebuke sin; yet we have "nothing against the soul; it is only against the devil that soweth "tares among the wheat. One sin, wilfully covered, will be like "mountains of lead upon the soul, to sink it from the presence of "God."

Being one day in conversation with Ephraim Welch,* concerning the war which then existed in America, and the great troubles occasioned thereby, Elder William said, "Wars will never cease "until God has finished his work with the nations of the earth; "and altho it may be buried, like fire, for a season; yet it will "break out, with sevenfold increase, among the nations of the "earth." Again he said; "The same sword which has persecu"ted the people of God, will be turned into the world among them"selves, and it will never be sheathed until it has done its work."

Sometimes he used to say, "We are poor; but we are able to "make many rich; poor afflicted people of God! Once I served "God out of fear; but now I serve him out of pure love." Sometimes he used to say, "I love my Mother; altho she is my sister; "yet she has become my Mother, and the Lord God has made me "to love her." When great numbers of believers came to Watervliet, to see them, he would often meet them at the door, and say, "Come in, brethren and sisters, come in; we have but little room "in our house; but we have a great deal of room in our hearts."

Tho Elder William was not gifted in public speaking; yet he had a very feeling soul; and his speeches, whether in public or private, were often very pathetic, and always sententious and powerful, capable of awakening the attention and feelings of the most stupid and careless. He labored but little in public word and doctrine; but his gift and strength were almost continually exercised in sufferings. His work of suffering continued to the end of his days; nor did he appear to die by any natural infirmity; but seemed to give up his life in sufferings.

During the last days of his life, tho his end was evidently near,

* A believer who lately deceased at Hancock.

and his bodily sufferings extreme; yet his soul seemed to be filled with the love and power of God. His spirit was comfortable and joyful, and his zeal and fortitude unabated, even to the last. When any of the brethren and sisters came in to see him, instead of complaining of his sufferings, he would often express his joy and comfort, his love to the work of God, and his desires for their faithfulness and prosperity in the gospel. He was an eminent example of patience and meekness under sufferings, and always manifested his willingness to suffer for the increase of the gospel.

Elder William delighted greatly in singing divine songs, for which he had a remarkable gift; his voice was strong, and his music melodious and powerful; and when under the immediate operation of the power of God, it seemed like the music of some superior being. A little before he expired, being unable to sing, he rose from his bed, and asked one of the brethren,* who was greatly gifted in spiritual songs, to sing for him, and who according to his request, sung for him a few minutes; but he was so far gone, that he was soon obliged to lie down again, and shortly after breathed his last, about six o'clock in the afternoon, July 21st, 1784, aged 44 years.

CHAPTER VI.

Sketches of the life, character and ministry of Elder James Whittaker.

James Whittaker was the son of Jonathan Whittaker, of Oldham, near Manchester, in England. His mother's maiden name was Ann Lee, probably a distant relation of Mother Ann. She was a member of the society under James and Jane Wardley, and was a faithful believer. His father stood in opposition for awhile; but was afterwards convicted and embraced the gospel, and had an anxious feeling to come to America with his son; but was not able: he died in the faith.

James was born February 28th, 1751, and received the testimony of the gospel in his childhood; he used to accompany his mother to the meetings of James and Jane Wardley, and was remarkably faithful and obedient to the instructions of his teachers. In his youth he was placed under the care of Mother Ann, and by her was carefully instructed in the way of God. Having by his faithfulness gained a great portion of the life and power of the gospel, he became eminently useful to her in the ministry.

Concerning his early experience in the way of God, he gave the following particulars. "I was brought up in the way of God by "my Mother, and knew no unclean thing. But when my soul

* Aaron Wood, who is now living at Watervliet.

'was waked up, I found myself a child of wrath. I then cried 'mightily to God: I do not think I spoke more than five words 'in a day; and I verily thought that the earth trembled under me 'for the space of a whole year. At this time I saw, by vision, 'my own soul in America with Mother's soul; and I heard all 'the conversation that passed between us and the men that put 'us into prison in Albany; and yet during the whole time of our 'imprisonment, I never once thought of my vision; but as soon 'as we were set at liberty, it all came fresh to my mind."

Among other extraordinary manifestations of God to him, in early life, we give the two following instances in his own words. 'One day, as I was walking with Mother, I felt the heavens open, 'and such flows of the heavenly manifestations and givings of 'God fell upon me, in so marvellous a manner, that my soul was 'filled with inexpressible glory; and I felt such an overflowing 'of love to Mother, that I cried out, *As the Lord liveth, and as 'my soul liveth, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.*" He added further, "that Mother then and there prophesied that he would succeed her in the ministry."

"When we were in England," said he, "some of us had to go 'twenty miles to meeting, and we travelled anights on account of 'persecution. One Saturday night, while on our journey, we sat 'down by the side of the road to eat some victuals. While I was 'sitting there I saw a vision of America; and I saw a large tree, 'and every leaf thereof shone with such brightness as made it 'appear like a burning torch, representing the church of Christ, 'which will yet be established in this land. After my company 'had refreshed themselves, they travelled on, and led me a con-'siderable distance before my vision ceased."

Elder James was evidently ordained of God to be Mother Ann's successor in the ministry. After attending her funeral, and speaking to the assembly under a great weight of grief and sorrow, he returned home, and the believers being assembled, he spoke and said, "My two friends and Elders are gone! I pray God to help me!" He then called upon all the brethren and sisters to help him keep the way of God, and urged the necessity of their being more faithful in the work of the gospel than they had ever been, as those who had the greatest gift for their protection were gone. The tears flowed abundantly. He spoke of the great weight that fell upon him with regard to the protection of the society, and his great concern and labor that the gospel might be kept and honored. So solemn and impressive were his words at this time, and so evident the power of God that appeared in him, that it produced a great impression upon the mind of every feeling believer. It was clearly seen and felt that Mother's mantle had fallen upon him, and that God had chosen him to lead and protect his people.

Elder James, in his person, was rather above the common sta ture, well proportioned in form, of more than ordinary strength fo his size, and a man of great activity. His complexion was fair, hi eyes black, and his hair of a dark brown color, and very straight He possessed an open and placid countenance, mixed with a pleas ing gravity, that at once evinced the goodness of his heart and th amiable mildness of his disposition. His voice was clear and solic but mild and pleasant. In short, his visage, deportment and con versation were all marked with an inexpressible something whic could not but impress the feelings of a stranger with confidenc and respect. It was not an uncommun expression among stran gers, on hearing him, to say, "I love to hear that James Whittake "speak."

In his temper and disposition he was mild, gentle and forbear ing: yet firm, undaunted, and inflexible in his duty. So amiabl was his deportment, and so winning his manners, that he ofte disarmed the most violent opposers of their rage. He was muc beloved by those who knew him, both believers and unbelievers and none were his enemies, except those whose opposition to th way of God which he taught, rendered every subject of it an objec of hatred. He possessed great meeknesss, humility and simplicit of soul, was remarkably tender hearted, kind and charitable, an abounded in heavenly love. The sympathetic powers of his sou were such, that when he wept it seemed as tho no feeling hear could refrain from tears; and when he rejoiced, every soul tha possessed the life of the gospel, could not but feel the power of hi joy, and rejoice with him.

In reproving sin, he was sharp and powerful; yet wise and care ful not to hurt the soul. In laboring with lost souls, in admonish ing the careless, instructing the ignorant, strengthening the weak relieving the buffetted, and binding up the broken hearted, his gi of wisdom and understanding was remarkable. He knew how t come to lost souls in every situation, and to administer help in du season.

He passed through many scenes of sorrow and affliction for th gospel of salvation, and planted and nourished it in many souls Being young while in England, he did not suffer so much persecu tion there as Mother Ann and Father William, and others; yc he had his full share of sufferings to pass through; so that it migh be truly said that, *the sufferings of Christ abounded in him.* I America he suffered much every way; yet he always bore hi sufferings with fortitude, and even with cheerfulness; so that whe most cruelly abused by persecutors, he would often kneel dow and pray for them with great fervency; sometimes saying in th words of Christ, "Father, forgive them: for they know not wha they do."

As he was brought up in the gospel from his childhood, he possessed a remarkable degree of purity of spirit. Indeed it seemed as tho every feeling of his soul breathed purity, righteousness and love: hence he was at all times able to bear a strong testimony against all impurity, unrighteousness, and every kind of evil. He often said, "The gospel is without fault; it is as strait as "straitness; it is pure as the heavens; and if you obey it not, you "will lose your souls."

With tears rolling from his eyes, he often expressed his love to God, and his thankfulness for the gospel in the following language; "O how precious is the way of God to my thirsty soul! I feel the "love of God continually flowing into my soul, like rivers of living "water! It is sweeter to my taste than the honey in the honeycomb. "I know that God owns me for his son; and yet I will pray to him. "I know how to pray, and I know how to be thankful for the "gospel; even my breath is continual prayer to God."

Sometimes he used to say, "I could willingly lay down my "life for my brethren, if I were called to it: for I feel that degree "of love for them, that they feel near and dear to me, like my own "soul." Again he would say, "My only treasure on earth is in "them that believe; I have no relation but in the people of God. "They who are faithful to serve God are my relations; they are "my interest and my treasure, and all I have is theirs."

As there were some who received great faith in Mother Ann, and were zealous during her ministration; yet as their faith centered in her person, and not in the revelation and power of God which dwelt in her, and which was transmitted through her to her successors; consequently such ones were exposed to suffer loss; and some indeed did suffer great loss, after she was taken from them. Father James felt a deep sense of their danger in this respect, and of the unspeakable worth of souls; and being thus impressed with the great importance of a deep and genuine work of salvation in every soul, he did not cease to warn the people, with tears in his eyes, to be faithful and persevering, and not lose that which they had already gained, by neglecting to labor for an increase of the gospel in their own souls.

In solemn warnings to the people, and for their encouragement, he used to say, "Wherever you are, whatever may betide you, "how dark soever things may appear, how unjustly soever you "may suffer, keep your faith; for the time will come when all "wrongs will be righted." And again; "I am not ashamed "to build up your faith; for your faith is most holy; but I know "you have infirmities, and I pray that the forbearance of God "may be lengthened out to you, till you learn to do right: for "you must have an exceeding righteousness; your righteousness "must exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees.

"Therefore treasure up in your hearts that holy treasure which
"will keep you in time of trouble. Keep your faith: for the end
"of your faith will be the salvation of your souls; and when I am
"gone, and you see the branches flourish, then know ye that the
"root is holy. I have ventured my life and soul among you, and
"you have received the gospel, and you are welcome to it."

Father James was a man of great humility, and often abased himself publicly before God, in deep humiliation of soul. Speaking one sabbath day at Harvard, in public, before a large concourse of people, and after addressing himself to the assembly with great solemnity, and evidently under a great weight of the power of God which brought a very solemn and affecting sensation upon all the assembly, he kneeled down; and the believers immediately fell upon their knees, and also many of the world who were deeply affected with his discourse. While on his knees in deep humiliation, he uttered these words; "I am but a poor worm of the dust
"and a very little one too! I feel many times as tho I could crumble into the dust before God." He often abased himself in this manner.

At another time, in a public assembly at Enfield, before he began to speak, he kneeled down under great humility of soul, and said, "God has committed the gospel to my trust."—He paused—the tears flowed plentifully down his cheeeks—He proceeded—
"I pray that God would lay nothing to my charge!—Christ is
"revealed; I feel his power in sorrow and in love—God has
"blessed me with a broken heart and godly sorrow for sin." After this he delivered a very affecting discourse, in which he preached the gospel of self-denial and the cross, and urged the absolute necessity of confessing and forsaking all sin, and closed his discourse in these words; "As you treat this gospel; so God will treat you
"If you slight it, God will slight you; if you regard it, God
"will regard you; for as the testimony of Noah condemned the
"old world; so shall this testimony condemn the present generation."

Father James often solemenly warned the believers not to suffer their souls to be overshadowed and darkened with those things which had a tendency to shut the gift of God from the soul. "I
"warn you brethren," said he, "not to be overcome with the care
"of this world, lest your souls lose the power of God, and you
"become lean and barren." Again he said, "The way to labor
"for the gospel is, to keep your minds exercised in laboring upon
"the things that belong to your peace, and not on the things of the
"world: for if yon give your minds to labor upon the things of
"the world, they will become corrupted." And again; "You
"ought to be watchful over your words, at all times, and be careful to know that you speak the truth; not tell things that you do

" not know to be true, in such a manner as to deceive others: you " ought to represent things as they are; and not deceive one ano- " ther; it is lying; it is wicked."

He used often to say, "Be what you seem to be, and seem to " be what you really are; don't carry two faces." And again; " You that dare use deceit, remember what I say; God will yet " meet you in a strait place." In reproving the believers for their wrongs, he often used to say, "If you don't love to hear of these " things, then leave them off; put away the cause, and the effect " will cease." Again; "Ye who have believed in God, be care- " ful to maintain good works." And again; "I will know no " man by his speech; but by the fruit he brings forth."

In the time of Shays's insurrection in Massachusetts, some of the believers in that state, in expressing their sentiments, manifested some party feelings concerning that event. Father James immediately rebuked that spirit, and said, "They that give way " to a party spirit, and are influenced by the divisions and contentions of the world, so as to feel for one political party more than " for another, have no part with me. The spirit of party is the " spirit of the world, and whoever indulges it, and unites with one " evil spirit against another, is off from christian ground."

In addressing a public assembly of believers at Ashfield, he said, " You ought to fear God in all you do. When you are about " your work, you ought to fear God; and even in the gifts of God, " and under the operations of the power of God, you ought to keep " the fear of God; lest by feeling releasement in those gifts, you " run into lightness." Again; "Heaven is a place of joy and " tranquility to those that find it; but I am jealous, and with a " godly jealousy too, that there are some here now, that never " will find it."* And again; "There are many and many pious " souls in this world, who live up to the best light they know, that " have never heard the sound of this gospel; but except your " righteousness shall exceed theirs, you shall in no wise enter into " the Kingdom of Heaven." Again he said, "Those that are called " by the gospel when they are children, and are faithful and obe- " dient, and keep out of sin, will be the flower of Heaven, and the " glory of Paradise."

About the middle of January, 1787, Father James, having assembled the believers in New-Lebanon together, in the meeting-house, came in under great heaviness of spirit, and with tears flowing from his eyes, he said, "I am going to leave you; I feel that my " work is done here, and I do not know that I shall ever see you " again in this world; but I leave those with you who are able to " teach you the way of God. I desire that you would treasure up " the gospel and make it your only interest. You are all the in-

* There were some then present who afterwards fell away.

"terest I have in this world; I have no other interest." He then kneeled down and wept exceedingly, and all the assembly with him. After rising from his knees, he warned the people in a very feeling and affecting address, to be faithful, and keep the way of God when he was gone, and said, "We have given you the gospel; see to it that you make a good use of it. Do abide faithful; those of you that abide faithful, will be like a bud in the bloom; but those who do not abide, will be like a falling leaf and you will remember these words when you cannot see me."

He then addressed the elders and laborers among the people and gave them a very solemn charge to be faithful and watch over the people for their protection, and said, "Deal with the brethren and sisters as I have dealt with you." He also warned them in a very special manner concerning the youth and children, and said "You must take care of the rising generation: for if they are protected, the time will come when they will be the flower of the pople of God." The next morning he set off for Enfield, in Connecticut, from whence he never returned. After tarrying a short time at Enfield, he visited the believers in Harvard, Shirley, Woburn, and other places at the eastward where they then resided, and returned to Enfield sometime in March, where he remained and was continually visited by the believers, till his decease.

Father James's ministry was short, but very active and laborious. He visited all the different places in the land where the gospel had been planted, and some of them several times. His labors were continually employed in strengthening the weak, comforting the afflicted, and purging out sin. It was the peculiar gift of his ministry to wean the affections of the believers from their natural and earthly ties, and prepare them for a spiritual relation in church order, which he foretold was at hand, and often spoke of it. His instructions to Elder Joseph Meacham and those with him, relative to gathering, building and establishing the church in gospel order might, with great propriety, be likened to the instructions of David to Solomon, concerning the building of the temple, which was a eminent type of this very work.

Many were the instructions, exhortations and solemn warnings which he delivered in the last days of his ministry. When he came near the close of his life, he said, "I have given you my life all I have, I have given unto you. If I ever had any thing, you possess it—it is yours; and now see that you make a good use of it." About two weeks before his decease, he said, "My body is under great sufferings; but I feel my soul at peace with God and man. I have given you the gospel; now see to it, what kind of use you make of it. If you keep the gospel, the gospel will keep you. I have given my life for the people; and after I am gone, there will be a great increase."

A little before his decease, there came a number of the brethren and sisters from New-Lebanon to see him, and being about to return home, they went into his room to take their leave of him. On entering the room where he lay, they all kneeled down in sorrow and tears, and in prayer to God, feeling sensible that this would be the last time they should ever see his face in this world. He addressed them and said, "I feel thankful to see you all, and that you have come to see me in my sickness, once more, before I leave the world. I feel weak in body, but comfortable in my spirit; and whether I live or die, the gospel will increase. I have had a great desire to come and see you all; but I have not been able; but my heart has been with you; and now your hearts must be with me, to labor for the power of God—for one union. I desire you would give my love to the people where you go, and tell them that I am alive, and that I never expect to die; for the sting of death is taken from me, and all fear and terror; yet I expect soon to put off this earthly tabernacle. Farewell."

When he was on his dying bed, numbers of the brethren and sisters went to see him. On enquiring how he felt, he said, "My sufferings are exceeding great; but that peace and consolation which I feel in my soul, overbalances them all. That peace and comfort which I feel in the gospel, I would not exchange for a thousand such worlds as this." He then exhorted all to hold on and hold out to the end, and said, "If you hold out to the end, you will feel that peace which I now feel."

Thus he continued to exhort, encourage and strengthen all around him till he expired, July 20th, 1787, in the 37th, year of his age. His funeral was attended on the following day, and the scene was very affecting to all the believers, who viewed him as their Elder and Father, and the last of those faithful ministers of Christ who had brought the gospel of salvation to this land, and who had been called to stand in the ministry.

SUPPLEMENTARY ARTICLE,

Concerning Elder JOHN HOCKNELL.

John Hocknell, whose name is repeatedly mentioned in the preceding pages, is very justly ranked among the first founders of the United Society, and was one of the principal supporters of the gospel in its first commencement in this country; and it is therefore but just and reasonable that he should be particularly noticed in this work; but for want of room the notice will be short.

He was a native of Cheshire, in England, and was a man of respectable character, and possessed considerable property. He had formerly belonged to the Methodist society, and afterwards became

a zealous member of the society under James and Jane Wardley and readily embraced the increasing light through Mother Ann and was a faithful believer. He was a man of very meek deport ment, and was greatly gifted in visions and prophecies, and wa well known among the believers of his day to possess the gift o healing. He was a great help to Mother Ann and her little family in a temporal view, and was very zealous in the support of th gospel. It was through his instrumentality that they were enable to cross the ocean, and establish themselves in this land. Indee the temporal assistance which his zeal and liberality afforded th society, in its infant state, was its principal dependence. He wa a very honest, conscientious and upright man, and continued faith ful and zealous during life, and lived to see the church establishe in gospel order, and with great joy, saw its growing prosperity, i things temporal and spiritual. He departed this life Februar 27th, 1799, aged 76 years.

PART II.

THE ESTABLISHED ORDER AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICE OF THE UNITED SOCIETY.

CHAPTER I.

Formation of the Society into a united Body, possessing a consecrated Interest.

As the manner of God's work, both in the natural and spiritual creation, has always been progressive, increasing from one degree of order to another until it arrives to perfection; so the order which has been established in the church of Christ on earth, was necessarily progressive, being effected by the progressive operations of his Divine Spirit in the hearts of the faithful. While the believers, as a people, remained in their respective natural families, scattered about in different places, possessing respectively the temporal interest inherited by natural heirship, or acquired by their own labors in their respective callings, there could not be much order among them, excepting the common order of nature. But all who had honestly confessed and forsaken their sins, and faithfully continued to take up their crosses, according to the manifestation of the gift of God which they had received, who had paid all their just debts, and freed themselves from all outward embarrassments, and by their faithfulness and obedience, had gained a sufficient degree of mortification to the fallen nature of the flesh, were thereby prepared for a further increase of gospel order. To gain this increase, it was necessary that they should be brought into a nearer connection together, and thereby be enabled to serve God in a more united capacity, as members of the body of Christ in a church relation.

To constitute a true church of Christ, there must necessarily be a union of faith, of motives and of interest, in all the members who compose it. There must be "one body and one bread:"* and nothing short of this union in all things, both spiritual and temporal, can constitute a true church, which is the body of Christ. And wherever that united body exists, it will bring into operation every individual talent for the general good of the whole body. And herein is the prayer of Jesus answered; "That they may be one, even as we are one."† In this united capacity, the strength of the whole body becomes the strength of each member; and being united in the one Spirit of Christ, they have a greater privilege to serve God than they possibly could have in a separate capacity, and are better able to be mutual helps to each other; and they also find a greater degree of protection from the snares of a selfish and worldly nature.

* 1 Cor. x. 17. † John xvii. 22.

The way having been gradually prepared for the attainment o this important object, particularly by the ministration of Fathe James, it now began to take place under the ministration of Fathe Joseph and Mother Lucy. The first step was to gather the be lievers into a body, where they could enjoy all things in common both of a spiritual and temporal kind, and in which their tempora interest could be united together, and be consecrated to religiou purposes. This proceeding, being dictated by Divine Wisdom was a matter of free choice to every individual: for no one wa compelled to give up his interest contrary to his own faith an inward feelings. But all who had faithfully kept pace with th work of God, in its increase thus far, and had been able to settl their temporal concerns, were prepared for it, and esteemed it special privilege to be admitted into that united body, and be num bered with the most faithful. But the permanent establishment o order was necessarily a progressive work, and could not be sud denly accomplished.

The gathering of the society began at New-Lebanon, in th month of September, 1787, and continued to progress as fast a circumstances and the nature of the work would admit. Elder and deacons were appointed to lead and direct in matters of spiri tual and temporal concern; suitable buildings were erected fo the accommodation of the members; and order and regularity were, by degrees, established in the society: so that by the yea 1792, the Church was considered as established in the principle of her present order and spirit of government. Those who wer thus gathered into a united body, were denominated *The Church* being a collective body of christians separated from the world, an enjoying, in their united capacity, one common interest. In thi situation, they were enabled to gain a greater degree of victory over the nature of selfishness, and thus to subdue, more effectually the evil propensities of a carnal nature. By this means they found a greater degree of mortification and death to the nature of sin and experienced a gradual growth in love and union, peace an harmony, and all those heavenly graces which adorn the man o God, and render him perfect in every good word and work.

But there were many whose circumstances did not, at that time admit of so complete a separation from the world, being still unde more or less embarrassments, or entanglements with those without These were progressively gathered into families, in a separate ca pacity, having a subordinate privilege; but at the same time, they were at full liberty to follow the example of the church, to walk i their steps, and to maintain the like united interest, in that capaci ty, as fast as their situation and circumstances would admit. Many of these, having unbelieving children and heirs, or being otherwis entangled in their temporal circumstances, could not, consisten

with the principles of justice to those without, immediately devote and consecrate their interest in the manner the church had done.

But in order that they might enjoy the benefits of a united inheritance, as far as their circumstances would admit, and be able to prove their faith in that capacity, they were allowed to unite and gather in their interest by agreement, and after taking an inventory of whatever they brought in, they devoted the *use* of it for the mutual benefit of the family thus gathered; but agreed to make no demands upon the family for the use of the property so devoted, or for any services which they might perform in that united capacity. But if they chose afterwards to withdraw from the family, or from the society, they were at liberty to withdraw the property which they had brought in: it being expressly understood that no property was to be brought in, except by the mutual agreement of the parties concerned.

This mode of proceeding is still practiced in the Society, and is considered to be just and equitable; because it secures to legal heirs their just portion of the inheritance, whether they belong to the society or not. Nor can it be considered as any injustice to the proprietors, who have voluntarily devoted the use of it, together with their services, with a full understanding of the conditions thereof. Besides, it has been found by experience, that families gathered in that capacity, are seldom able to do more than maintain themselves, and discharge those necessary calls of duty and benevolence which occasionally fall in their way; because such families are generally encumbered with children, and often with those who are aged and infirm, besides more or less poor persons who bring in nothing with them; and all who are held in union, must have their equal share of support, whether they are able to earn it or not.

But families formed under these circumstances, have an equal right with the church, whenever their situation and circumstances will admit of it, voluntarily to consecrate their interest, and enter into the same covenant relation, in their family capacity, as the members of the church enjoy. It is however necessary that families, as well as individuals, on their first coming out from the world, and gathering near the society, should prove themselves in that situation, for a suitable length of time, in order to confirm their faith by experimental obedience, before they can be admitted as members of the society in a united capacity.

But in that separate situation, tho they have the entire control of their own temporal concerns, they may, at any time, apply for counsel and instruction, either spiritual or temporal, whenever they feel the need of it. They have also the privilege of attending and uniting in the public meetings of the society, and of visiting their elders for the benefit of spiritual instruction, and of being

visited by them, so long as they continue faithfully to take up their crosses, and walk worthy of their profession. For altho every honest and faithful believer considers it a very desirable privilege to become one with the united body, in all things, and to devote and consecrate himself, soul and body, time and talents, with all his earthly inheritance, to the service of God forever; yet, to arrive at that order, and obtain so desirable a privilege, is as necessarily a progressive work, at this day, as it was in the first commencement of the work in America, and requires a preparatory work now, as really as it did then.

In this situation, they are required to prove their faith by their works. This they will generally do in the course of a few years, and sometimes in a few months; and will either gain an increase of faith and strength, and spiritual understanding, so as to be prepared for a further privilege; or they will fall back, in consequence of their unfaithfulness, and return again from whence they came. But while they remain in that situation, they are required to manage their own temporal concerns, according to the best of their understanding and abilities, to pay all their just debts, and settle all their concerns abroad, according to the principles of justice and equity; to provide for themselves and their families, to bring up their children in the fear of God, and instil into their minds the principles of virtue, and to be just, upright and conscientious in all their dealings. By these means, they will gradually prepare themselves for a further privilege in a united capacity.

Such families, provided their circumstances admit of it, are often enlarged by the addition of individual members, who have recently embraced the faith of the Society, and who are admitted to the privilege of proving their faith along with the family. All that is required of such individuals is, to live conscientiously according to the principles of continence, purity and holiness which they have professedly received, agreeable to the precepts and example of Jesus Christ; and in conforming to these principles, their local situation does not prevent their union with the society.

But as the work of God is an increasing work, neither families nor individuals, if they continue faithful, can feel satisfied to remain in any situation short of the more perfect order of the gospel. Because, if they gain an increase of faith and understanding, they will soon feel the want of a nearer relation to the society, and a greater separation from the world. But if they do not gain this, they will, of course, fall back to the world: for all who are faithful and honest-hearted, will find an increasing gain; but those who are unfaithful, instead of an increase of faith and understanding, or any spiritual light, they will necessarily fall into a state of spiritual darkness; and then will be verified in them, the words

of Christ, "If the light which is in you become darkness, how "great is that darkness!"*

As the law of Christ can never bind the conscience of any soul; so, where there is a difference of faith between married persons, the husband or the wife, whose faith it is so to do, has a just and lawful right to preserve his or her own body in sanctification, and devote it to God, in a life of continence and purity; and this is an inherent right which no law of God nor man can disannul or take away; therefore, no person whatever, can have any right to forbid or hinder such a devotion in either party. Conscience is the throne of God in the soul, and the soul's justification before God, must depend on the purity of its conscience; hence a right to violate the conscience cannot possibly exist in either party. "We "are not debtors to the flesh, to live after the flesh,"† in any of its gratifications.

If a brother have an unbelieving wife, or a sister an unbelieving husband, and the parties can agree to live together in peace, they are not required to separate on account of their faith; but the believing husband is bound to take care of his unbelieving wife, to provide for her, and treat her with christian kindness and charity, to set her an example of godliness, and give her no just cause of offence. So also the believing wife is bound to live with her unbelieving husband, to treat him with all kindness, to show forth an example of humility, meekness, modesty and faithfulness in all things, to lay no stumbling blocks in his way, nor give him any just cause of offence. But if they cannot live together in peace, they may separate by mutual agreement, and divide their inheritance according to the principles of justice and equity. The Society does not admit of a separation on any other conditions; unless the conduct of the unbelieving party be such that the believer, after having faithfully fulfilled all moral obligations, can be fully justified, both by the laws of God and man, in a final separation. The practice of the Society, in this respect, coincides with the directions of the apostle to the Corinthians.‡

As all people, whether married or unmarried, who have property at their own disposal, are left to their own choice respecting the disposition of themselves and their property; it must therefore depend on their own choice, after having embraced the gospel, whether they will devote either themselves or their property to

* The darkness of such souls is often truly astonishing. We have known repeated instances of persons who, having been once enlightened by the Spirit of Truth, and having rejected their light, and indulged themselves in actual sin, contrary to the dictates of their own consciences, have gradually sunk into such a state of spiritual darkness, as not only to testify against the pure principles of their former light, but also to run by degrees, into total infidelity. Some have become insensible and regardless of every thing pertaining to religion; others, after contending with different denominations, have run, first into *Deism*, and then into professed *Atheism*: and truly, if *Atheism* can exist in a rational soul, then those who have rejected the greatest light, have been suffered to fall into a state of darkness approaching the nearest to it.

† Rom. viii. 12.

‡ See 1 Cor. vii. 12 to 16.

the service of God. But after they have had sufficient time to prove their faith, and gain a full understanding of the principles of the Society, so as to be able to make a deliberate and conscientious choice for themselves, and having settled all their temporal concerns, so as to be free from all outward embarrassments, they may then freely dedicate and devote themselves and their services, together with all their temporal interest, to the service of God, to be forever consecrated to pious and charitable uses, according to the covenant of the Church.

Having deliberately done this, there can be no room for any recantation; because whatever is thus devoted cannot be withdrawn without the sacrilegious violation of a consecrated right. And whoever deliberately violates his faith, and withdraws or separates himself from the Church, after such a solemn dedication, can be viewed, by the faithful, in no other light than as a reprobate. And tho the deacons may grant a moderate donation to such a one, as an object of charity; yet his own voluntary act, in putting his hand to a religious covenant, and consecrating himself, his services and property to God, and afterwards turning his back, and actually violating his sacred promises, must forever debar him from any lawful claim to any of the property or services so consecrated. This will appear evident by the following extracts from the written covenant.

"Article IV. We solemnly and conscientiously dedicate, devote and give up ourselves and services, together with all our "temporal interest, to God and his people; to be under the care "and direction of such elders, deacons or trustees, as have been, "or may hereafter be established in the church, according to the "first Article of this covenant."

"Article VI. We further covenant and agree, that it is, and "shall be the special duty of the deacons or trustees, appointed as "aforesaid, to have the immediate charge and oversight of all and "singular, the property, estate and interest, dedicated, devoted and "given up as aforesaid: and it shall also be the duty of the said "deacons or trustees, to appropriate, use and improve the said "united interest for the benefit of the Church, for the relief of the "poor, and for such other charitable and religious purposes as the "gospel may require, and the said deacons or trustees, in their "wisdom shall see fit: *Provided nevertheless*, that all the transactions of the said deacons or trustees, in their use, management "and disposal of the aforesaid united interest, shall be for the benefit and privilege, and in behalf of the Church, (to which the "said deacons or trustees are, and shall be held responsible,) and "not for any personal or private interest, object or purpose whatever."

"Article VIII. As the sole object, purpose and design of our

"uniting in covenant relation, as a church or body of people, in "gospel union, was from the beginning, and still is, faithfully and "honestly to receive, improve and diffuse the manifold gifts of "God, both of a spiritual and temporal nature, for the mutual pro- "tection, support, comfort and happiness of each other, as breth- "ren and sisters in the gospel, and for such other pious and chari- "table purposes as the gospel may require: *Therefore*, we do, by "virtue of this Covenant, solemnly and conscientiously, jointly "and individually, for ourselves, our heirs and assigns, promise and "declare, in the presence of God and each other, and to all men, that "we will never hereafter, neither directly or indirectly, make nor "require any account of any interest, property, labor or service, "which has been, or which may be devoted by us, or any of us, to "the purposes aforesaid; nor bring any charge of debt or damage, "nor hold any demand whatever, against the Church, nor against "any member or members thereof, on account of any property or "service given, rendered, devoted or consecrated to the aforesaid "sacred and charitable purposes."

The preceding extracts are made from the written covenant of the Church; but every separate Society, being a branch of the Church, has the care and management of its own temporal concerns, and this also is essentially the case with separate families in the Society, whose circumstances will not admit of being immediately connected with the united interest of the Church: hence each society has its separate written covenant, for the protection of the temporal property belonging to it; but where a family is established upon the principles of a united interest, its covenant is essentially the same as that of the Church.

It is an established principle of faith in the Church, that all who are received as members thereof, do freely and voluntarily, of their own deliberate choice, dedicate, devote and consecrate themselves, with all they possess, to the service of God forever.* Hence the property and services of each individual, after being consecrated and improved in the manner specified, must ever be considered as consecrated property, and no longer subject to the legal claims of the former owner.

According to the law of Moses, which was typical of the law of Christ, "No devoted thing that a man shall devote unto the Lord, "of all that he hath, both of man and beast, and of the field of his "possession, shall be sold or redeemed: every devoted thing is "most holy unto the Lord."† So also, according to the law of Christ, whatever is dedicated to God, according to the Covenant of the Church, can never be returned or withdrawn, but must forever remain devoted to the objects of the gospel.

* To attempt such a consecration in deceit, would be to act the part of Ananias and Sapphira, whose fate was a striking evidence of the Divine displeasure against such base hypocrisy See Acts, ch. v.

† Lev. xxvii. 28.

But as the law of Christ requires that whatever is consecrated to God, should not only be done by a voluntary act; but also that those who undertake it, should be of mature age and understanding, capable of acting deliberately and considerately; therefore, children under age cannot be received into the Church as members; but they may be taken under the care and guardianship of the Society, by the request or free consent of their parents or guardians, together with their own consent. But when they become of lawful age, they must then make their own choice, both with regard to themselves and property, if they are heirs to any property. And it is an established principle in the Society, that children, who are faithful and obedient to their parents until they become of age, are justly entitled to their equal portion of the estate of their parents, whether they continue with the Society or not.

CHAPTER II.

The established Order and Government of the Church.

The government of the Church of Christ is spiritual, and it must always remain so; because it must always be under the power and influence of the Spirit of Christ: otherwise it cannot be the Church of Christ. Any power or authority exercised over the true Church of Christ, which does not proceed from his Spirit, or is not conformable thereto, cannot stand.

A false church may be supported and governed by a false spirit, but it is not so with the true: the cause of truth must be supported and governed by the Spirit of truth. A church founded on human wisdom, supported by human creeds, and governed by human authority, is but a dead body, being destitute of the real life and power of the gospel; of course it cannot withstand the powers of darkness and the corruptions of sin, and therefore becomes, at once, a church of Antichrist, and holds its power and authority in direct opposition to the Spirit of Christ.

The visible head of the Church of Christ on earth, is vested in a Ministry, consisting of male and female, not less than three, and generally four in number, two of each sex. The first in the ministry stands as the leading Elder of the Society. Those who compose the ministry, are selected from the Church, and appointed by the last preceding head or leading character: and their authority is confirmed and established by the spontaneous union of the whole body. This is the true order of election and succession in the Church of Christ, and there never can be any other so long as the Spirit of Christ governs his Church.

This was clearly typified under the Jewish dispensation, which was figurative of the Church of Christ. God appointed

Moses, and Moses appointed Joshua; and so also, God selected David from among the sons of Jesse, and David selected Solomon. And while the Israelites kept the law, this manner of succession was observed and blessed; but when they rebelled, and turned from the law of the Lord, to follow the examples of other nations, the appointment of their leaders was often factious and arbitrary.

Under the gospel dispensation, Christ chose his own apostles. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you," said he. And this was also the order of succession in the primitive church. The apostles appointed their immediate successors; and while this order was faithfully observed, the church was preserved in its union; but when the primitive christians began to be influenced by the spirit of Antichrist, and the contentious principles of the world, and elected their bishops by strife and debate, the unity of the church was destroyed, and contentions, divisions and animosities followed. By these means the church lost the power of God, and fell under the dominion of Antichrist, and gradually degenerated into an ecclesiastical despotism, and became one with the world.

Those of the United Society who are selected and called to the important work of the ministry, to lead and direct the Church of Christ, must be blameless characters, faithful, honest and upright, clothed with the spirit of meekness and humility, gifted with wisdom and understanding, and of great experience in the things of God. As faithful ambassadors of Christ, they are invested with wisdom and authority, by the revelation of God, to guide, teach and direct his church on earth, in its spiritual travel, and to counsel and advise in other matters of importance, whether spiritual or temporal.

To the Ministry, therefore, appertains the power to appoint ministers, elders and deacons, and to assign offices of care and trust to such brethren and sisters as they shall judge to be best qualified for the several offices to which they may be assigned. Such appointments, being communicated to the members concerned, and having received the mutual approbation of the church, or the family concerned, are thereby confirmed and established until altered or repealed by the same authority. All selfish and aspiring feelings and pursuits are excluded; and, as far as it is practicable, every member is placed within his proper sphere for usefulness. By this means every gift and talent is brought into its proper place, and put into exercise where it can be the most useful.

This is not effected by any worldly wisdom; but by the eternal law of righteousnes in God: for no man nor woman, as such, can lead and govern the church of Christ. The church being the body of Christ, is supported by his Spirit, which is the life of that body; consequently the operations of his life upon the members of his

body, must necessarily govern the body, and bring every thing into its proper place and order; so that the whole body, with all its members, can operate harmoniously with the Spirit, in bringing forth the fruits of the gospel, in their regular order. As the sap, which is the life of the tree or vine, operates in the body and all its branches, to bring forth the leaves, blossoms and fruit, according to the times and seasons established by the laws of nature; so operates the Spirit of Christ in his body, the Church. This accords with his parable of the vine.*

Altho the Society at New-Lebanon is the center of union to all the other societies; yet the more immediate duties of the Ministry, in this place, extend only to the two societies of New-Lebanon and Watervliet. Other societies are under the direction of a Ministry appointed to preside over them; and in most instances, two or more societies constitute a bishoprick, being united under the superintendence of the same Ministry.

In every society, ministers are appointed to bear testimony of the faith and principles of the society to those without, and give informaiton to candid enquirers; also to receive and instruct those who visit the society for that purpose, and to admit those who receive the same faith, and desire to unite themselves to the society. They are also occasionally sent abroad to preach the gospel to the world of mankind, as duty may call, and the way be prepared for it. The number of these ministers, both male and female, is more or less, as occasion requires.

In every society, elders are appointed and etablished in each large family, consisting, generally, of two persons of each sex. These are considered as the head of the family. They are required to be persons of blameless character, well approved for faithfulness, integrity and stability of soul, and gifted in wisdom and spiritual administration. As faithful watchmen upon the walls of Zion, it becomes their duty to watch over their respective families, to teach, exhort and lead in spiritual concerns.

The management of temporal concerns, in such families, is intrusted to the deacons and deaconesses, as trustees of the temporal property of the society or family to which they belong. To these pertain the duties of providing for the support and convenience of their respective families, of regulating the various branches of business in which the members are employed, and of transacting business with those without. All the members are equally holden, according to their several abilities, to maintain one united interest; and therefore all labor with their hands, in some useful occupation, for the mutual comfort and benefit of themselves and each other, and for the general good of the society or family to which they belong. Ministers, elders and deacons, all without excep-

* See John, ch. xv.

tion, are industriously employed in some manual occupation, except in the time taken up in the necessary duties of their respective callings.

Thus all are faithful, cheerful and happy in the conscientious performance of their respective duties; and such is the spirit of industry that pervades the whole Society, that an idle, lazy person will not long abide in it. And this is effected by no other coercive power than the force of conscience, and the spirit which prevails throughout the Society: for none are required to labor beyond their strength and abilities, and each one must act conscientiously in this, as in all other duties. If reproof or admonition is at any time found necessary, it must be applied through the medium of the conscience: for the law of Christ admits of no external compulsion.

No selfish or party feelings can have any sway in the Church of Christ: for the whole power of government being founded in the law of Christ, and supported by the union of the members, any power, authority or influence, which has any tendency to produce disunion, contrary to that law, is necessarily excluded from any participation in the government. In short, the whole government of the Church is effected, and all its important concerns are regulated and maintained, by the spontaneous union and subjection of all the faithful to the law of Christ, established in the Church. And thus is fulfilled the prediction of the prophet: "They shall "see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion."*

In our extracts from the covenant of the Church, in the preceding chapter, it will be seen that the temporal interest of the Church is intrusted to the deacons, for the purposes therein specified. Hence it may be seen, that neither deacons nor elders have any more claim upon the property of the Church than the rest of the members, otherwise than by the trust reposed in them, for the benefit of all concerned. Those intrusted with the greatest care, are the greatest servants; and those whose care and concern it is to labor for the welfare of the whole, are verily the servants of all, and are the more highly esteemed in their calling, "for their "works' sake."†

Such are the principles of faith, order, regularity and gospel union, planted in the hearts of the members; and such their sense and understanding of the law of Christ, that no faithful soul can ever seek, or even wish to seek for the preeminence, or have any desire to usurp authority over another. Those in places of trust feel themselves under the greatest obligations to be faithful, knowing their accountableness, as servants of Christ, and stewards in the house of God, to be just, upright and faithful in the discharge of the duties incumbent upon them. But should any one, in any office of care

* Isa. lii. 8. † See Mark x. 44. 1. Thess. v. 13. and Heb. xiii. 17.

and trust, yield to the influences of evil, and cease from his faithfulness, he would unavoidably lose that union of the spirit which so strongly binds the faithful together in the bonds of love and harmony; of course, he would forfeit the esteem and confidence of the members, and could no longer retain his office in the Church.

The very spirit of the gospel, which governs the Church, and influences all its members, has a direct tendency to excite every faithful soul to feel an interest in building up Christ's Kingdom on earth, in things spiritual and temporal; consequently all the faithful are united, "as the heart of one man," to improve their time and talents in acts of virtue and goodness. This work is effected by a life of daily self-denial and the cross; by subduing every evil propensity; by fulfilling the law of love to God and good-will to man; by cultivating the principles of peace and harmony; by practising industry and prudence, kindness and charity; by seeking the comfort and happiness of each other, and endeavoring to promote the prosperity of the Church.

These are duties which all are conscientiously bound to perform; and herein is a practical illustration of that genuine love which distinguishes the true followers of Christ from all others. "By "this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love "one to another."* "Ye shall know them by their fruits."† Here the rich and the poor all fare alike, according to their needs and circumstances, without any respect to the property which they have separately brought in. And here is verily fulfilled, in substance, what was prefigured by the manna gathered in the wilderness: "He that gathered much had nothing over, and he that "gathered little had no lack."‡

It is certain that nothing short of Divine Wisdom could ever have devised a system of equalization, so just and equitable, and yet so contrary to the partial, aspiring and selfish nature of man. And surely, no selfish motives could ever lead any people to embrace a system of religion which strikes at the very foundation of selfishness, and inspires its subjects with the principles of impartial love and disinterested benevolence. But all honest-hearted believers, being the subjects of that one religion, are governed by one spirit, which tends directly to a oneness in all things. And this oneness gains the ascendency over disorder and confusion, and necessarily produces order and regularity, in things spiritual and temporal; while those things which lead to disorder and confusion, are gradually purged away.

Such is the force of conscience, and the sense of rectitude in every faithful member, that should any inadvertently violate the rules of good order, or in any manner transgress the law of Christ, and be overcome with evil, they would immediately lose their

* John xiii. 35. † Matt. vii. 16. ‡ Exod. xvi. 18.

justification, and could feel no peace of mind until they had confessed the wrong and found forgiveness: this every faithful soul would readily do. But if any are found unfaithful, and regardless of good order, they soon lose their union, and it becomes the duty of the elders to examine, admonish and reprove them, and endeavor to reclaim them in the spirit of kindness and charity. But if such ones will not be reclaimed, they will fall of course; because no one who lives in any known violation of faith, or wilfully persists in any wrong, is able to keep the union of the spirit, which is the very life and support of the Church and all its members.

All those of the Society who have received an understanding faith in the work of God, are conscious that the most faithful, honest and upright souls do not only gain the greatest share of love, confidence and respect from their brethren and sisters; but do actually experience the greatest measure of the Divine favor and blessing. Hence all the honest-hearted are stimulated to faithfulness, feeling and knowing it to be the only means of securing the favor and blessing of God, and the love and confidence of their brethren and sisters; conscious also, that if they fail in these things, they must eventually lose their union and relation to the Society, and fall off, like withered branches, as has been the case with many, whose fate is a solemn warning to all who prize their privilege in the gospel.

CHAPTER III.

The Government and Education of Children.

THE suitable government and education of children is a very important concern, and one among the practical duties of the Society, which claims particular attention. The time of childhood and youth, is the choicest period of life to instil into the mind the principles of virtue, to store it with useful instruction, to form practical habits of goodness, and to regulate and bring into operation every useful talent. It is also the most critical period of life, and requires the greatest care and attention to form, regulate and govern the various dispositions of the mind, and subdue the natural propensities to evil, before they become habitual and unconquerable, as they most generally will, if neglected in childhood.

By strict attention at this early period, the mind, in ordinary cases, is easily formed for a life of virtue and usefulness; but by neglect, the child is often ruined. Where children are suitably governed by their parents and guardians, when young, they readily acquire habits of self-government; and thus a most important point is gained: for a man or woman without the power of self-government, is like a ship without a rudder, which becomes at

once the sport of winds and waves. Hence a suitable government in childhood, is a matter of the first concern.

Moral and religious instructions come next in order. When a man is able to govern himself, and subdue his evil propensities, or at least to keep them in subjection, he is then, and not till then, in a fair way to be benefitted by moral and religious instructions. So when a child is governed, it may be instructed to some profit; but not before.

A suitable school education, if not next in importance, is undoubtedly the next in point of time and age. Indeed children may be governed, and receive their moral, religious and literary instructions, and be conducted along by degrees, in all these points, to good advantage, provided each is wisely administered in its proper time, place and order.

But to give children literary instructions, without governing, and teaching them to govern the natural propensities and dispositions of their minds, and without instructing them in the principles of moral virtue, would be a ready way to lead them to ruin. Because, in such a case, their literary knowledge would only tend to sharpen their talents, and assist them in the pursuit of evil inventions. A few such characters (and there are generally more or less such ones to be found in all public seminaries) would be liable to ruin the morals of thousands.

Were all children suitably governed and instructed in early life, one single age would undoubtedly produce a vast reformation in the morals of the community at large; and criminal courts, state prisons and the gallows would, probably, in the course of a single century, become nearly or quite useless.

The government of children, being of essential importance, was strictly enjoined upon the believers, and especially upon parents, by Mother Ann, and received the earliest attention of the Society. Moral, religious and literary instructions were also particularly recommended by her, and carefully and punctually attended to, where children were gathered into families, within the reach of such instructions. But in the early stages of the Society, believers who had children, were very much scattered; so that much of the moral and religious instructions administered to the children, were often lost upon them, in consequence of the prejudices continually infused into their young minds, against every thing that had any connection with what was contemptuously called *Shakerism*.

The inveterate enmity and opposition which, in those days, prevailed so extensively against the Society, was a serious obstacle in the way of schooling children. The Society was not, at that time, sufficiently organized to establish regular schools of their own; and it was found altogether unsafe to send their children to the neighboring schools, where they had nothing to expect but abuse,

or a corruption of morals. It was therefore extremely difficult, for a number of years, to pay much attention to literary instruction, even had the object been ever so desirable; besides, the general attention of the believers was engrossed with matters, which then appeared of much greater concern.

But the children were not altogether neglected in this respect. Day and evening schools were opened and kept up, where it was practicable. By means of these and other private instructions, given from time to time, as circumstances permitted, the children brought up in the church, both male and female, are all able to read and write; and those who possessed the best capacities and the brightest natural talents, have generally received a proportionate degree of literary instruction. This is indeed more than could have been expected, considering the difficulties which attended the organization of the Society, and which, for many years, pressed so heavily upon the people.*

But these difficulties were at length so far surmounted, that schools were regularly organized and maintained in the Society; so that the children now gathered in, are regularly instructed in the various branches of common school education; and where traits of genius appear, they have opportunities of instruction accordingly; and thus all receive instruction proportioned to their genius, talents and capacities for usefulness. This we consider as sufficient; because it will avail nothing for children to spend their time in acquiring a knowledge of the higher branches of literature, and especially of what is called classical learning, unless they can apply their knowledge and learning to some beneficial purpose. Learning without usefulness is, at best, but mere lumber of the brain, and often excludes those things which might have been far more useful in its place.

We are not insensible that among the most numerous and popular professors of christianity, and especially those of the theological school, a liberal education is deemed indispensable in those whom they are willing to receive as ambassadors of Christ. Many youth are annually sent to college for this purpose; and after having spent four years time, and obtained a sufficient classical education, they are admitted to the study of *divinity*. They must now spend, perhaps, three years more in some theological seminary, in order to finish their education, and qualify them for the

* The people, at the time of their coming together, were mostly poor; a large proportion of them were utterly destitute of any temporal property, and had therefore nothing to recommend them but their faith To establish order and regularity among a large body of people, so circumstanced, to provide for their support, protection and convenience, and to build them up in the principles of union, peace and harmony, both in things spiritual and temporal, was an arduous undertaking, which required much time and labor, and was attended with many trying difficulties; and these difficulties were greatly increased by the powerful opposition of an unbelieving world, which, like a mighty flood, often threatened the destruction of the Society.

gospel ministry. Thus qualified, they are commissioned and sent forth as *ambassadors of Christ!*

Those who commission these young students, are doubtless very careful to see that they are, according to their rules, fully qualified, by their classical and theological studies, for such a work. But what evidence have they that God has chosen them to this work? or that their studies have qualified them, in his view, for ambassadors of Christ? Are they as careful to obtain evidence of these facts, as of their literary attainments? And dare they commission these pupils without evidence equally positive and satisfactory? These theological divines will doubtless acknowledge that it is the prerogative of Christ to chuse his own ministers, and to commission whom he sees fit; and yet they presume to act as divine agents in this business; but by what authority? and where is their divine commission? They will admit also, that Jesus Christ called Peter and others from their nets, and conferred on them the apostleship, without a liberal education. He also called Paul, and sent Annanias to commission him for a like purpose; and altho it is admitted that he had received an education; yet who ever supposed that he was educated with a view to the apostleship?

What man would presume to educate his son for a foreign minister, and then commission and send him to a foreign country, in the name of his government? And what government would accept such a minister, unauthorized by the government which he professes to represent? Civil governments do not receive nor acknowledge ministers of this description; and yet what better is the common practice of educating and commissioning those who are styled *ambassadors of Christ?* And where is the divine authority to sanction the practice? Is it not an impious and heaven-daring usurpation of a Divine prerogative? for if the individual subjects of a government cannot educate and commission foreign ministers, nor even ministers for the home department, for their own government, which is composed of men of like passions with themselves, how can they, without a divine commission, presume to do it for HIM who "seeth not as man seeth."

Without boasting of any extraordinary literary attainments, believers have hitherto been able to learn their duty, and to do it; to receive moral and religious instructions, and live according to them; to understand the plain and simple truths of the gospel, and walk in them; firmly believing that those who know their Master's will and do it, render a far more acceptable service to God, and will obtain a more glorious reward than those who, with the greatest literary attainments, have never learned to do the will of God.

In their schools, the Society at New-Lebanon and some other

places, have adopted the Lancasterian mode of instruction, as preferable to any other; but with some variations, more congenial with their manner of government and tuition: And the remarkable proficiency of the scholars is a proof of the excellency of their institution.*

After a suitable common school education, the youth are instructed in some manual occupation, which, as far as practicable, is adapted to their genius and capacities; so that all may have the benefit of some useful calling, by which they can procure a maintenance, provided they are capable of it. The children gathered into the Society, are mostly those brought in by their believing parents; tho the Society has, occasionally, taken in the children of others, by the earnest solicitations of their parents and guardians; but this is not a common practice.

All are carefully taught to regard the principles of honesty, punctuality and uprightness, in all their conduct; to keep a conscience void of offence towards God and all men; to be neat, cleanly and industrious; to observe the rules of prudence, temperance and good economy in all their works; to subdue all feelings of selfishness and partiality; to let the law of kindness, love and charity govern all their feelings towards each other; to shun all contention and strife, and be careful never to give nor take offence; to conduct themselves with civility, decency and good order before all people; to promote the happiness of each other as the only sure way to enjoy happiness themselves; and to bless one another as the best means of securing the blessing of God.

In short, both aged and young, male and female, are required to live and conduct themselves towards each other as becomes faithful brethren and sisters in the gospel. And it is found by actual experience, that those who are the most solicitous to promote the peace and happiness of their brethren and sisters, do themselves enjoy the greatest measure of peace and happiness. Hence male and female, as faithful brethren and sisters in Christ, renouncing all amorous conduct and conversation, can live together, from year to year, in gospel purity, peace and union, enjoy each other's society in social harmony, freely share in each others kindness, and faithfully labor to promote each other's happiness.

* We feel no disposition to combat the false reports of our enemies; they are welcome to all the benefit they can reap from such reports; but to quiet the anxiety of those who have been induced thereby to believe that we bring up our children in heathenism, by denying them the use of the Bible, we would merely state that, besides other useful books on various subjects, the Society has always been well supplied with Bibles and Testaments, of various sizes, suitable for all ages; and we believe there cannot be found a single dwelling room in the Society, that has not one or more Bibles in it; and the children have, at all times, free access to them, as soon as they are able to read.

CHAPTER IV.

Progress and present state of the United Society.

In the beginning of the year 1780, the Society consisted, in all, of but about 10 or 12 persons, all of whom came from England. Early in the spring of that year, the people in this country, having heard their testimony, began to gather to them; and from this time, there was a gradual and extensive increase in numbers, until the year 1787, when those who had received faith, and had been faithful from the beginning, and who were the most fully prepared, began to collect at New-Lebanon. Here the church was established, as a common center of union, for all who belonged to the Society, in various parts of the country. This still remains as the Mother-Church, being the first that was established in gospel order; and all the Societies in the various parts of the country, which are established upon the same gospel foundation, and governed by the same spirit and principles, are branches of the one *Church of Christ.*

During a period of five years, from 1787 to 1792, regular Societies were formed and established upon the same principles of order and church government, in the various parts of the eastern states, where the testimony of the gospel had been received. The local situation of each Society, and the present estimate of their numbers, may be stated as follows.

The first and largest Society is at New-Lebanon, situated about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of Lebanon Springs, in the county of Columbia and state of New-York, about 25 miles southeast from Albany, and contains, at present, between 5 and 600 persons, including old and young, male and female.

There is also one at Watervliet, about 7 miles northwest from the city of Albany, in the same state. This was established soon after the church at New-Lebanon, and now contains upwards of 200 members.

One at Hancock, in the county of Berkshire and state of Massachusetts. This is situated about 3 miles southeast from New-Lebanon, and 5 miles west from Pittsfield, and contains about 300 members.

One at Tyringham, about 16 miles south from Hancock, in the same county, which contains about 100 members.

One at Enfield, county of Hartford, in the state of Connecticut, about 5 miles east from Connecticut River, and about 18 miles northeasterly from Hartford, which contains about 200 members.

One at Harvard, in the county of Worcester and state of Massachusetts, about 30 miles northwesterly from Boston, which contains about 200 members.

One at Shirley, county of Middlesex, in the same state, about 7 miles west from Harvard, which contains about 150 members.

One at Canterbury, county of Rockingham, in the state of New-Hampshire, about 12 miles north by east from Concord, which contains upwards of 200 members.

One at Enfield, county of Grafton, about 12 miles southeast from Dartmouth college, in the same state, which contains upwards of 200 members.

One at Alfred, county of York, about 30 miles southwesterly from Portland, in the state of Maine, which contains about 200 members.

One at New-Gloucester, county of Cumberland, about 25 miles northwest from Portland, same state, which contains about 150 members.

These were all the Societies formed prior to the year 1805. About the year 1785, the testimony was withdrawn from the world; so that for a number of years, there was no public manifestation of the faith of the Society to those without. The great and important work which was then progressing in the Church, rendered this cessation of the testimony essentially necessary: for while the believers were gathering themselves into Societies, and establishing gospel order, they found enough to do, without testifying their faith to others. As this was an important change, and absolutely necessary for the protection and permanent establishment of the Society, it required all the energies of soul and body to accomplish it.

It was necessary for the believers, after having received the faith of the gospel, to prove the efficacy of their faith, to try their obedience, to establish their principles by the test of actual experience, and to build themselves on that foundation which could never be shaken. And even after the order of the Church was gained, and its general principles established by the revelation of God, it required some years of persevering faithfulness in every good work, on the part of the people, to strengthen and invigorate the whole system. This was essentially necessary in order to render it a permanent, spiritual institution, calculated to be a pattern and an example of a true gospel church, a purified body, in which the true Spirit of Christ could abide, and from which could proceed that spiritual life and Divine light, which must extend the power of salvation to all who are willing to receive it.

During this important period, very few were added to their number. But near the close of the 18th century, the order of the Church being established, and the foundation of Zion laid, for the ingathering of souls, the way was prepared for the sound of the gospel trumpet to be renewed. Accordingly the testimony began to be held forth to those whose minds were awakened to enquiry. Many, by reflecting upon the signs of the times, and comparing them with the prophecies of scripture, concerning the se-

cond coming of Christ, were led to believe that the period to which these prophecies alluded, had actually arrived, and were earnestly looking for some visible display of that great event.

Some of these, by visiting the Society, and observing the lives and manners of the people; and examining and comparing their outward fruits with the testimony of Jesus Christ and his apostles, and with the lives of the primitive christians; and perceiving that the general conduct of the Society was invariably governed by virtuous principles, they were thereby excited to a more particular enquiry. The result was a full conviction in the minds of many; so that from that time to this, there has been a gradual increase of numbers, more or less, in every society of believers throughout the land.

But the greatest and most remarkable increase has been in the western states. About the beginning of the 19th century, a most extraordinary revival of religion, commonly called *The Kentucky Revival*, commenced in the western states.* This work was swift and powerful, and exhibited such evident proofs of supernatural power, that it excited the attention of all classes of people, and, for a season, bore down all opposition. The extraordinary and very astonishing outward operations which attended that work, are well known, and have been made the subject of serious investigation and reflection, in various parts of the United States. The subjects of this wonderful work, besides the marvellous operations of the power of God upon their bodies, were greatly exercised in remarkable dreams, visions, revelations and the spirit of prophecy. In these gifts of the spirit, they saw and testified that the great day of God was at hand; that Christ was about to set up his Kingdom on earth, and that this very work would terminate in the full manifestation of the latter day of glory.†

This remarkable work extended through several of the western states, and continued, with increasing light and power, about four years. During the latter part of the year 1804, many of the subjects of this mighty work were powerfully impressed with a belief, that another summer would not pass away without realizing a full display of that great salvation from sin, for which they had been so long and so earnestly praying, and which they had not yet attained, by all the light and power of the revival.

The believers in the eastern states received repeated intelligence of this work from the public papers, and well remembering the prophecy of Mother Ann, concerning the opening of the gospel in the western country, they began to look for its speedy fulfil-

* See a particular account of this extraordinary work in a small volume entitled "The Kentucky Revival," by Richard M'Nemar, first published in 1807.

† Tho the real work of the Kingdom had already commenced in the eastern states; yet it was unknown to the people of the western country; and therefore, as to them, it was still future, and of course it was represented to them, by the spirit of prophecy, in the future tense, as a work to come, and which they have since realized.

ment. This prophecy had often been spoken of, while that country was the theater of Indian wars; and it appeared that its fulfilment was now near at hand. Accordingly, near the close of the last mentioned year, the Church at N. Lebanon was impressed with a feeling to send out messengers to visit the subjects of the revival, in that country, with a view to search out the state of their minds, and open the testimony of salvation to them, provided they were in a situation to receive it. John Meacham, Benjamin S. Youngs and Issachar Bates were selected for this important mission.

Without any previous acquaintance in the western country, or any correspondence with the inhabitants, these messengers set out on the first day of January 1805, on a pedestrial journey of more than a thousand miles. In the course of this journey they passed through some trying scenes, in which they were evidently protected and supported by the overruling hand of Divine Providence. They arrived in Kentucky about the first of March, visited a number of places where the spirit of the revival had prevailed, saw and conversed with many who had been the subjects of it, and felt some freedom to declare their mission. They then passed over into the state of Ohio, and after visiting and conversing with some of the subjects of the revival in Springfield in this state, they proceeded on to Turtle-Creek, near Lebanon, in the county of Warren, where they arrived on the 22d of March.

They were providentially led to the house of Malcham Worley, a man of respectable character, handsome fortune, and liberal education, and who had been a leading character in the revival. Here they felt freedom to declare their mission and open their testimony in full, which Malcham received with great joy, and declared to them that it was the very work which he had been taught to look for, by the spirit of prophecy. This man had before frequently testified, by the spirit, that the work of the latter day, which would usher in the Kingdom of Christ, in that country, would commence in this place, and spread between the two Miamies. This place was situated between these two rivers, near Turtle-Creek; and there the work did, in reality commence, and he and his family were the first who embraced it.

From thence it spread, and was cordially received by many of the subjects of the revival, in that neighborhood, and in a short time, had an extensive circulation through that part of the state, and soon afterwards extended into Kentucky and Indiana, and was joyfully received by many, and violently opposed by many others. Indeed the violence of opposition, in various places where the testimony was received, was often so great, that nothing short of Divine Power could have protected the lives of these messengers, and rendered their testimony effectual.

The great opposition which was raised against the testimony, in

that country, was first instigated by the principal leaders of a class of people who had styled themselves *Christians*, in contradistinction to all others who professed that name, under different denominations. Some of these had been distinguished leaders in the late revival; but instead of advancing forward into that increasing work, to which the spirit of the revival had so powerfully directed them, they had set themselves to building up tabernacles on that illuminated ground, which had been so eminently distinguished by the light of the revival. Having devised a plan, embracing a universal system of religion, which was to blend all denominations into one, and in which they doubtless expected to hold a preeminent rank, they had assumed the *christian name*, as an appropriate title to their profession.

But when they perceived by the spirit of the present testimony, that instead of ruling in earthly tabernacles, on a mount of eminence, and wielding the banners of a universal religion, they must descend into the valley of humiliation, and humble themselves on a level with the people over whom they had before presided, confess their sins in the presence of those whom they had considered as greatly their inferiors, and take up a final cross against "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," and thus renounce forever these most darling pleasures of nature, they flinched from the dreadful undertaking, and chose rather to forego the answer of their former prayers for *Christ's Kingdom to come*, than to enjoy its blessings at such a *killing* sacrifice.

Hence, after rejecting so great light, they became the foremost in opposition, and exerted all their influence to prejudice the minds of their hearers, and excite them to acts of violence. In this they were but too successful, especially with those who were determined to have the pleasures of a carnal nature at the risk of their eternal salvation; and hence arose those scenes of opposition and persecution which followed. These scenes began by opposing, molesting and disturbing the believers, in their testimony and worship, by various kinds of mockery, railing and cursing, by threatening, pushing, collaring, and other acts of personal abuse and insult.

From these things they proceeded to more extensive acts of violence and injury, both of a public and private nature; such as besetting their houses in the night, breaking their windows, assaulting their persons with clubs and stones, beating and abusing their bodies, throwing down their fences in the night, and turning in cattle to destroy their grain, cutting and mangling their fruit trees, cropping and disfiguring their horses, and what seemed still more malicious, burning their place of worship, and also their barns and stables, which contained their stores of hay and grain.

These violent and lawless abuses being found insufficient to ex-

terminate the society, or to suppress their testimony, more deliberate and more extensive measures were adopted. Legal prosecutions were instituted upon the most frivolous pretences; petitions were drawn up, subscribed and laid before the legislature; and finally, to insure success to their measures, subcription papers, accompanied by malicious reports, and enforced by inflammatory speeches, were industriously circulated through the country, with a view to raise forces sufficient to expel the believers from the country, and thereby effectually to suppress the hated religion and its galling testimony. The minds of the inhabitants being thus instigated and prepared, it required no legal authority to raise forces sufficient, in their opinion, to accomplish their object.

Accordingly, on the 27th of August, 1810, a body of five hundred armed men, led on by officers in military array, appeared before the principal dwelling of the Society in Union Village. This formidable force was preceded and followed by a large concourse of spectators, of all descriptions of people, estimated at nearly 2000 in number,* whose object was to witness the mighty conflict, expected to take place, between a body of 500 armed men, and a few harmless and *defenceless Shakers*. Among this great concourse were many who were friendly to the Society, and whose only wish was to prevent mischief and preserve peace; but the far greatest majority were either entire strangers or decided enemies, who came to support the military in case of necessity. Many of these were armed in mob array, some with guns and swords, some with bayonets fixed on poles or sticks of various lengths, and others with staves, hatchets, knives and clubs. These formed a motly multitude of every description, from ragged boys to hoary headed men, exhibiting altogether a hideous and grotesque appearance.

But notwithstanding all these threatening and warlike appearances, no confusion appeared among the believers through the day; but they remained calm, peaceable and undismayed, and attended to their usual occupations with as much regularity as the confused circumstances of the day would permit.

This motly multitude having collected, and the troops having taken their station near the meeting-house, a deputation of 12 men came forward, headed by a presbyterian preacher;† and after making a number of unreasonable and inconsistent demands, (demands with which the leaders of the Society had neither power nor authority to comply,) they proceeded to state, as the principal requisition of this extraordinary concourse of armed men, that the Society should relinquish their principles and practice, their public testimony, mode of worship and manner of living, or quit the coun-

* Some supposed the number to exceed 2000, exclusive of the military force.

† Matthew G. Wallace, who acted as chief speaker, and appeared to be the organ of this mighty army.

try. These extraordinary demands were accompanied with threats of violence in case of refusal.

The answer of the Society was calm and mild, but plain and positive: That they esteemed their faith in the gospel dearer than their lives, and were therefore determined to maintain it, whatever they might suffer as the consequence; and as to quitting the country, they were upon their own possessions, which they had purchased with their own money, and for which they were indebted to no man; that they held no man's property, and therefore had a just right to the peaceable enjoyment of their own possessions, in a free country, and were entitled to those liberties granted by the laws of their country, including the liberty of conscience.

It cannot reasonably be supposed that such an extraordinary assemblage of men, in hostile array, could have been mustered on such an occasion, had they all been personally acquainted with the believers. But many of them, having probably never seen a *Shaker*, had been influenced by false reports, inflammatory speeches and publications of evil minded men; some of the most malicious and influential of whom were professed preachers of the gospel; and the more ignorant part being called out by their officers, to crush a growing society of people, whom they verily supposed were more inhuman than the savages of the wilderness, and whose religion they had been taught to believe was far more dangerous than popery or mahometanism, they readily complied with the call. And unfortunately for the honor of civilized society, there are generally many found in it, who are always ready to assist in any riotous proceedings, whenever occasion offers.

But many who came armed, were astonishingly disappointed when they found that they had no occasion for arms, as they found no enemy to combat. The calm, peaceable and harmless deportment of the believers, together with the expostulations of a few respectable individuals who were friendly to the Society; and the freedom shown, and liberty given to examine the youth and children, reported to be held in bondage; the orderly and flourishing appearance of their school; the marks of contentment visible in the countenances of the children, and the decent and orderly appearance of every thing around them, all conspired to change the sentiments and feelings of these *vindictive warriors* to such a degree, that they all withdrew without committing any abuse, or occasioning any contention, except among themselves.*

The enemies of truth being thus defeated in this bold and formidable enterprize, renewed their exertions to inflame the public mind, and effect the destruction of the Society. But in consequence of an increasing acquaintance of the inhabitants with the people of

* We have given only the outlines of these transactions; our limits will not permit us to be more particular.

this Society, by which their lives and manners became more generally known, together with some signal instances of the interposition of Divine Providence in their favor, the malicious efforts of their enemies became, by degrees, less successful. For there are but few, in the present day, who are willing to persecute an honest people for their religion, when once their real sentiments are well known; and, unhappily, those few are generally found among the most bigoted professors of some false religion: for true religion never produced any persecutors. But, unfortunately, there are many inconsiderate mortals to be found in every civilized country, who, having no principle of their own, readily become the dupes of designing bigots, and by them are often urged to acts of violence which would put even savages to shame.

These persecutions in the western states, produced inquiry and personal examination, which generally led to a knowledge of the truth: consequently the testimony of truth prevailed, and believers were multiplied. People of all classes, and various denominations, the high and the low, the rich and the poor flocked together, and seemed equally anxious to hear the testimony and become partakers of the way of life and salvation. In various places the preachers and their people, with equal zeal, embraced the testimony and took up their crosses; and among the great numbers who set out to walk in the narrow way, were many respectable characters of different denominations.

The testimony has mostly prevailed in the states of Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana, where Societies have been established. There are at present, five Societies in these three states. But many from other states have embraced the testimony, moved in, and become members of these Societies. There are two Societies in the state of Ohio; one at Union Village, in the county of Warren, about four miles west from the village of Lebanon, and 30 north by east from Cincinnati. This is the oldest and largest Society in the western states, and contains nearly 600 members. The other is at Watervliet, on Beaver Creek, in the county of Montgomery, about 22 miles north from Union Village, and 6 southeast from Dayton, which contains about 100 members.

There are also two in Kentucky; one at Pleasant Hill, in Mercer county, about 7 miles easterly from Harodsburg, and 21 southwesterly from Lexington, which contains between 4 and 500 members. The other is at South Union, Jasper Springs, in Logan county, about 15 miles northeasterly from Russellville, and contains between 3 and 400 members. The fifth and last is at West Union, Knox county, in the state of Indiana. It is situated on Busseron Creek, near its confluence with the Wabash, about 16 miles above Vincennes, and contains upwards of 200 members. There are also numbers in various parts of the United States, who

have embraced the faith of the Society, but whose circumstances have not, as yet, admitted of their being gathered into a regular body.

The number of believers contained in all the Societies, both in the eastern and western states, exceeds 4000. Two thirds, at least, of this number have been added since the commencement of the present century; and the number is gradually increasing.* Most of the Societies contain a number of large families; and each family is accommodated with one or more large and convenient dwelling-houses, and with shops and out-houses, for the convenience of carrying on the various branches of business pursued by the family. There is also, in each Society, a house for public worship, and an office or offices for the transaction of public business.

The principal employments of the people are agriculture, horticulture, and the various branches of domestic manufacture; of course the principal articles of consumption among them, are mostly of their own produce and manufacture; and their various mechanical branches furnish a variety of articles for market.

Temperance and chastity, plainness and simplicity, neatness, industry and good economy, are among those virtuous principles which actuate the people of the United Society, in all their temporal concerns, and which tend greatly to promote the health and prosperity of the Society, and insure the blessings of Divine Providence upon all their labors. And it is found by many years experience, that this manner of life is more conducive to the general health of the body, than any other with which we are acquainted; and this experience has also proved, that fewer deaths have occurred in the Society, since its establishment, in proportion to the

* We are far from feeling a disposition to proclaim our numbers to the world; but the inquiries which are continually made by strangers, to ascertain our numbers, and the local situation of the different Societies in our communion, have induced us to give a statement of these particulars. We are, as yet, but a small people, and few in number, compared with the vast multitudes enrolled in the catalogues of other denominations; but when we consider the testimony of Jesus Christ, that, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto "life, and few there be that find it," we cannot but feel a sense of thankfulness for that mercy of God, which has called us to be numbered with the chosen few; and to us it is a matter of more importance to increase in the principles of peace and righteousness, than to increase in numbers. Yet we feel a firm reliance upon the promises of God, by the mouth of his prophets: "I will multiply them and they "shall not be few; I will also glorify them, and they shall not be "small.—A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong "nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time." See Isa. lx. 22, and Jer. xxx. 19.

number of people, than is usual among those who live after the common course of the world.*

CHAPTER V.

Remarks on the Worship of God: the origin, practice and reasonableness of Dancing, as an act of Divine Worship.

THE subject of religious worship has excited the attention of all nations, of all religions, throughout all ages of the world. Perhaps there is no subject on which there has existed a greater diversity of sentiment. Even among those who profess the christian religion, the great variety of opinions would seem to indicate to an impartial observer, that almost every different denomination believed in a different God, and expected to be saved by a different Savior, and to enjoy a different Heaven.

This great diversity of opinion, on a subject of such infinite importance to all, is certainly a most conclusive evidence of the great deficiency of the Spirit of God among christian professors, and of their ignorance of his true character and most acceptable worship. In former days, this diversity of sentiment was the occasion of great contentions and persecutions; but since the principles of civil and religious liberty have had a prevailing influence, and the spirit of persecution has lost its tyrannical power, modern christians profess great charity and forbearance towards each other; but still the same difference of religious sentiment prevails, and there are still many ways of performing religious worship.

When Jesus Christ was on earth, he prayed for his followers, that they might be one with him, as he was one with the Father. "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be "one in us." And again: "that they may be one, even as we "are one."† And the apostle Paul to the Ephesians, testifies that there is, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and "Father of all."‡ If then there is but one God, one Lord, one faith and one baptism; and if Christ is one with the Father, and his people are one with him; how is it that those who profess to be his people, at the present day, are so divided into sects and parties? Surely Christ's true followers cannot be divided; they are one with him, as he is one with the Father.

Again: Jesus Christ testified, saying, "I am the way, and the

* The ancients reckoned a generation to last 30 years, and the moderns have generally agreed that the life of man has not increased. From the commencement of the United Society, in the year 1780, up to 1800, the average ages of those who deceased at New Lebanon, and Watervliet, exceeded 50 years. Since that period to the present time, the average ages of all that have deceased in these two societies, amount to about 60 years. Tho there was, in the beginning, at least, an ordinary proportion of young children, and tho many children have since been gathered into the Society; yet only 5 have deceased under 10 years, and but 27 under 21 years of age.

† John xvii. 21, 22. ‡ Eph. iv. 5 6.

"truth, and the life."* He did not say, "I am *one* of the ways;" but, "I am *the way*." Again he said; "God is Spirit; and they "that worship him, must worship in spirit and in truth."† How then is it possible that the *One Spirit of God*, which is in Christ, who teaches us to worship *in spirit* and *in truth*, should at the same time, teach christians so many different opinions, and direct and establish so many different ways of worship, as the result of these different opinions? Surely no true christian, who knows any thing of the Spirit of God, can ever suppose this to be the case; and if not, then we would ask, who has taught these opinions, and directed and established all these ways of worship?

The Spirit of God and of Christ, which is *one*, necessarily leads to a *oneness*, both in doctrine and in worship; but the various doctrines and modes of worship among the various sects of professing christians, instead of uniting souls in the Spirit of Christ, produce a contrary effect. They tend much more to scatter and divide; and hence the increasing divisions and separations that are continually taking place, from time to time, among those who call themselves christians.

"In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrine the commandments of men."‡ And so long as their systems of religious doctrine and worship are of human invention, so long will they worship in vain. The only worship which is, or ever can be acceptable to God, is that which is performed in obedience to his will. Therefore, the first object of every rational soul ought to be, to know the will of God, and to do it. "If any man will do his "will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."||

In the early ages of mankind, after the fall, it does not appear that there was any established order of worship given; but, those whose hearts were turned to honor the living and true God, worshipped him by their obedience in those things which he commanded them. Thus Enoch, Noah, and the rest of the early patriarchs, served God; and thus Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and the prophets, in after ages, served God. And tho they frequently offered sacrifices and burnt-offerings; yet it was done in obedience to the will of God; otherwise their offerings could not have been accepted.

After the children of Israel were brought out of the land of Egypt, they, as a body of people, a chosen generation, served God by their obedience to those ordinances which God gave to Moses for their protection. This was the established worship of the children of Israel; and this continued with all who were obedient to the will of God, till the coming of Jesus Christ. A short time previous to the ministration of Jesus Christ, John the Baptist was sent to preach repentance and baptize with water; and all who

*John x. 6 †John iv. 24. ‡Matt. xv. 9. ||John vii. 17.

received his testimony, and were obedient to it, honored God by confessing their sins and receiving the baptism of water, which was a figure of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which was to follow, as the true baptism of Christ.

But during the dispensation of Moses, through all the law and the prophets, it is worthy of particular remark, that God would not accept the offerings of those who were disobedient, but severely reproved them by the mouth of the prophets. "Ah, sinful na-"tion, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children "that are corruptors! Bring no more vain oblations; to what pur-"pose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: "when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from "you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear."* These, and many other severe reproofs, clearly show that God would not acccept an offering from those who were disobedient and sinful, even tho the offering, in other respects, were conformable to his Divine Institution. And so it is in the present day; God never will accept any kind of offering, nor any manner of worship, from those who live in disobedience to his will, and knowingly commit sin.

When Jesus Christ came, he served God by doing his will in all things; he faithfully finished the work which the Father gave him to do. The apostles also, and the primitive christians, who were faithful to obey the law of Christ, worshipped God as they were moved and directed by his Spirit; and by their perfect obedience they found justification before God.

But as the Kingdom of Christ was not permanently established on earth, at that time, tho the work of his Kingdom was begun, and the foundation of his Church was laid, yet the time had not arrived, nor was the way prepared for a permanent establishment; therefore no particular order of religious worship could be fully established in that day; and indeed, if any such had been given, it would undoubtedly have shared the fate of those institutions which were given, that is, it would have been shamefully corrupted or utterly destroyed by the wicked works of Antichrist, which soon followed. But while the primitive christians stood faithful in their calling, they assembled themselves together, and worshipped God in prayer, vocal or silent; in praise and thanksgiving; in exhortations to faithfulness, and in feasts of charity, by which they expressed their love and union to each other; in prophesying and speaking with new tongues, and in such other acts of worship as they were led into by the operations of the Holy Spirit.

This various kind of worship, excepting perhaps some of the apostolic gifts, continued, mostly, with all the true witnesses, who followed the dictates of the Spirit of Truth, through all the long

* Isa. i. 4, 11, 13, 15.

and gloomy reign of Antichristian darkness, until near the time of Christ's second appearing.

At this time, there were many who felt themselves involved in a night of spiritual darkness, in which they saw that the great body of christian professors, instead of being led by the influence of the Holy Spirit, had become the blind and bigoted dupes of human creeds and human ceremonies, and were led and governed by worldly wisdom and ecclesiastical policy, under the power of Antichrist. Under a sorrowful impression of this truth, they chose to distrust their own natural wisdom and judgment, in regard to spiritual things, as being liable to lead them into the same dead formalities, and to rely on the influence of the Holy Spirit to guide and direct them in the worship of God. Hence they performed no acts of worship, except such as they were involuntarily moved to perform by the influence of the Spirit of Life from God.

A number of these faithful souls, having united themselves together, and being thus separated from the lifeless formulas and fruitless ceremonies of human invention, and feeling wholly dependent on the gift of God, devoted themselves to his will, determined to follow no guide short of a clear manifestation of Divine light. Hence the light of Divine truth, and the operations of Divine power, increased among them, until they were involuntarily led, by the mighty power of God, to go forth and worship in the dance. The apostolic gifts were also renewed in their full power; so that "they spake with new tongues and prophesied." In these operations, they were filled with melodious and heavenly songs, especially while under the operation of dancing. These involuntary operations of singing and dancing were repeated, from time to time, in their assemblies, tho often intermixed with other spiritual gifts, till, by Divine Revelation, they became an established exercise in the worship of God.

Thus the exercise of dancing in the worship of God, was brought to light, not as an exercise of human invention, instituted by human authority; but as a manifestation of the will of God, through the special operations of his Divine Power.

This exercise was expressly pointed out by the law and the prophets, as the peculiar manner of worship to be established among God's people in the latter day. As the great and last display of God's grace to fallen man, and the peculiar mode of religious worship attending it, were to be introduced through the female; so it is worthy of remark, that under the law and the prophets, both the example and the promise were, in a peculiar manner, prefigured in the female.

When the children of Israel were delivered from their Egyptian bondage, (which was a striking figure of the redemption of God's people from the dominion of sin,) Moses and the children of Israel

sung unto the Lord a song of thanksgiving for their deliverance. "And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel "in her hand; and all the women went out after her, with timbrels "and with dances."* Also, when Jephthah returned from his victory over the children of Ammon, "his daughter came out to "meet him with timbrels and with dances."† So also, after the victory of David and the Israelites over Goliah and the Philistine armies, "The women came out of all the cities of Israel, singing "and dancing."‡ And again; at the yearly feast of the Lord in Shiloh, the daughters of Shiloh came out "to dance in dances." And when the ark of God was removed and established in the city of David, the occasion was celebrated by the same exercise; David and all Israel danced before the Lord.

It appears evident that dancing was practised among the children of Israel, on all joyful occasions, and especially on obtaining a victory over their enemies; which was a figurative manifestation of the manner in which the true followers of Christ were to be called to worship God, and manifest their joy in the latter day, for their victory over the powers of darkness. And as this kind of worship was acceptable to God in that day, and was the highest expression of joy and thankfulness that could be used on such extraordinary occasions; so it was not only a most striking figure of the joy and triumph of the saints in the latter day, but an evident example of the most expressive kind of worship in which they can unitedly exercise the faculties of soul and body, in the service of God.

In consequence of the captivity of the Israelites in Babylon, they were deprived of this sacred exercise, and, like the vessels of the sanctuary, it was profaned by the wicked, in the service of the Devil. Hence the lamentation of the prophet Jeremiah; "The "joy of our heart is ceased; our dance is turned into mourning."‖ And tho this kind of worship was abused in the idolatrous revels of the wicked; yet a promise was given that it should be restored in the latter day. And it is worthy of remark, that this promise is particularly connected with the promises which allude to the restoration of the church, and the latter day of glory.

Thus saith the Lord, by the prophet Jeremiah; "Behold, I will "bring them from the north country, and gather them from the "coasts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the "woman with child and her that travaileth with child together: a "great company shall return thither."¶ Here is a particular allusion to the operations of the gospel of Christ, in his second appearing, which was to be made manifest in calling lost souls from the various quarters where they were scattered, and gathering them to

* Exod. xv. 20. † Judg. xi. 34 ‡ 1 Sam. xviii. 6. ‖ Lam. v. 15.
¶ See Jer. chap. xxxi.

a place of peace and safety, where they were to enjoy the benefits of the gospel, in a united body.

And again: "They shall come with weeping, and with supplications will I lead them: I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a strait way, wherein they shall not stumble." This implies that, forsaking the former course of their lives, they were to come as humble penitents, imploring the mercy of God, and seeking salvation from sin. By *the rivers of waters*, is to be understood, the refreshing streams of eternal life, which will cleanse, purify and refresh the soul that receives the benefit of them. By walking *in a striat way, wherein they shall not stumble*, implies that the way will be so perfectly plain, clear and certain, that no one can doubt the safety of it, nor stumble into any darkness or uncertainty while he keeps in it; and being a way of perfect righteousness, it cannot possibly admit any thing that is sinful or wrong.

"Therefore they shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord:—Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together: for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. And I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and my people shall be satisfied with my goodness, saith the Lord."

What can be more plain and clear to the point than these declarations of the prophet? What words could describe with more certainty, not only the fulness of joy, comfort and satisfaction of those who should come into this plain and perfect way, but also the divine exercises, and very manner of worship in which they would be engaged? The term *virgin*, signifies purity; and this prediction of the prophet was evidently intended to imply, that those who should be called to this glorious work, and enjoy these blessed privileges, must be a pure people. Hence, "both young men and old," being characterized by the title *virgin*, must possess purity of heart, and live a virgin life.*

We are aware that a strong prejudice prevails against the exercise of dancing, as an act of divine worship, in consequence of its having been, for many ages, perverted to the service of the wicked. Hence it is considered by many as, at best, but a vain recreation, much more calculated to gratify the levity of giddy, thoughtless mortals, and to divert the mind from sober reflections, than to enliven the devotional feelings of the heart, and promote the solid enjoyments of the christian. Therefore they judge it altogether unreasonable and inconsistent to suppose it can be acceptable to

* It is the prevailing opinion that this prophecy alluded to the return of the Jews from Babylon; but admitting that the prophecy had a literal allusion to that event; yet their return was but a figure of the restoration of the true church: and as the character of the Jews was by no means answerable to the title of *the virgin;* therefore the true spirit of that prophecy could not be fulfilled in them; its real accomplishment must be in *the virgin church of Christ*.

God, as an act of divine worship. But we would seriously ask whether the same objections will not operate, still more forcibly, against singing, as an act of divine worship?

It is a well known fact, that every created talent, pertaining to fallen man, which was designed for the service of God, has been perverted and abused to vain, foolish and wicked purposes; and perhaps none more generally so than that of singing. Music, unconnected with dancing, is doubtless much more generally used, as an amusement of the wicked: besides, as it is the very life of dancing, it must, at least, be equally reprehensible in that view alone. But this is not all. The talents of poetry and music, exclusive of their connection with dancing, are still far more abused by being devoted to base purposes.

Is there a single base passion or evil propensity, in human nature, which has not been more or less excited, indulged and gratified by means of poetical and musical compositions? How often have the angry passions been roused by war songs, and urged mankind to mutual butchery, blood and slaughter? How often have the lascivious passions been excited and indulged by obscene songs!—How often is morality set at nought, and piety and religion abused, yea, and the name of God and all sacred things blasphemed by the wicked, in their profane songs! How often has vice been exalted, and virtue depressed—yea, how often has the virtuous mind been robbed of its innocence, and villany emboldened in crimes, by songs calculated and used for those very purposes! Do not the revels of drunkards and profane swearers often owe their excesses to their bacchanalian songs, as well as to their bottles?

In short, have not thefts, robberies and murders, and indeed every species of villany, been much more excited and encouraged by music than by dancing? And yet music has been encouraged and practiced, as a part of divine worship, by nearly all denominations, while dancing has been condemned and excluded. But upon what principle? Why truly upon this; that dancing cannot be an acceptable mode of worship, because it is practiced in the carnal recreations of the wicked! Thus man assumes the right of deciding in what manner God shall be worshipped! But will God acknowledge such a decision as this? And must the followers of Christ, in compliance with this decision, bury a portion of their talents in the earth, which were given for the service of God, because the wicked have profanely abused such like talents, in the service of the Devil? Does such a decision appear honorable to the wisdom of man, even upon the supposition that he has a right to decide in what manner God shall be worshipped? Is it not rather a glaring evidence of the total insufficiency of human sagacity to regulate those things which belong to Divine Wisdom?

God has created man an active, intelligent being, possessing im-

portant powers and faculties, capable of serving himself according to his needs and circumstances; and he is required to devote these powers and faculties to the service of God. To devote only a part to the service of God, is to render an imperfect service, which God never will accept. Man is required to love God with all his heart, soul, mind and strength.* Every faculty must therefore be devoted to the love of God; but it is in vain to talk of loving God with all the faculties, without serving him with all the faculties: for no man who truly loves God with all his faculties, can refrain from devoting all to his service; and he who is unwilling to devote all to the service of God, can never devote all to his love.

God has created nothing in vain. The faculty of dancing, as well as that of singing, was undoubtedly created for the honor and glory of the Creator; and therefore it must be devoted to his service, in order to answer that purpose. God has created the tongue of man, and endowed it with the faculty of speech, by which he is enabled to manifest the desires and feelings of his mind. He has also created the hands and the feet, and enabled them to perform their functions, in the service of the body. And shall these important faculties, or indeed any of the powers and faculties of man, be active in his own service, or in the service of sin, and yet be idle in the service of God? Or shall the tongue alone be employed in the service of God, while all the other faculties of the body are idle, or otherwise employed? employed too, perhaps, in some evil, or at best, some useless purpose.

The parable of the unfaithful servant, who buried his talent in the earth, is well calculated to show that God requires of man the faithful improvement of his talents; and it must hence appear evident, that he who will not improve his talents, cannot be accepted of God, nor find an entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. Man is made up of certain active powers and faculties which were created of God, and which must be employed in some active service, or remain idle. When these faculties are exercised in divine worship, God is honored and glorified by them; but when they are exercised in the service of sin and Satan, then God is dishonored thereby. If therefore the soul who suffers these talents to remain idle and unimproved, is to be excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven, what must be the portion of him who employs those talents in the service of the Devil, which were given him for the service of God?

God requires the faithful improvement of every created talent. "O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice "of triumph.—Sing unto the Lord a new song; sing his praise in "the congregation of the saints. Let the children of Zion be "joyful in their King; let them praise his name in the dance."†

* See Mark, xii. 30. † Psa. xlvii. 1. and cxlix. 1, 2, 3.

These expressions of the inspired Psalmist are worthy of serious consideration. Do they not evidently imply that the Divine Spirit which dictated them, requires the devotion of all our faculties in the service of God? How then can any people, professing religion, expect to find acceptance with God by the service of the tongue only?

Since we are blessed with hands and feet, those active and useful members of the body on which we mostly depend, in our own service, shall we not acknowledge our obligations to God who gave them, by exercising them in our devotions to him? Or shall we act the part of dishonest debtors, who deal in good words and fair speeches, instead of repaying what they justly owe? Words are but sounds uttered by the tongue; and if uttered in truth and sincerity, they may express the ideas and feelings of the heart; but the heart, without the assistance of the tongue, is capable of expressing to God all that we can express by the tongue.

God indeed looks at the heart; and altho some may plead the merit of devoting their hearts to God, and urge that he can be sufficiently worshipped by such a devotion, without the exercise of dancing, or any other exertion of the bodily faculties, not even excepting the tongue; yet the heart must be but feebly engaged in the worship of God, when all the active powers of the body are idle. There is too powerful a connection between the body and mind, and too strong an influence of the mind upon the body, to admit of much activity of mind in the service of God, without the co-operating exercises of the body. But where the heart is sincerely and fervently engaged in the service of God, it has a tendency to produce an active influence on the body.

"From the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." So also from the heart proceeds that fervency of spirit by which we worship God in the dance, and by which we show forth the acknowledgments of the soul to Him who gave us life and activity. The devotion of the heart, which includes all the feelings and intentions of the mind, is indeed, absolutely necessary at all times, and under all external exercises. For a thousand adorations of prayer and praise, pronounced by the tongue, would be but empty sounds, without the devotional feelings of the heart, which must finally test the sincerity of the worshipper, in the sight of God. So also, with regard to the exercise of dancing, or any exercise of the bodily powers, they must proceed from the heart, or they can never find acceptance before God.

As union is the distinguishing characteristic of the true followers of Christ; so it is an essential part of the worship of God. Where a body of christians are united in spirit, they cannot but feel a peculiar blessing when united in their religious devotions. To render this the more perfect, a uniformity of exercise is necessary.

Indeed the true union of the spirit has a direct tendency to produce a harmonious order, in the exercises of divine worship. As Christ's followers are one with him, as he is one with the Father; so, where all are united in one spirit, to worship God according to his own appointment, they will be engaged in a uniform exercise. Such is the harmony of the heavenly world, and such must be the harmony of the christian church.

It will doubtless be granted, that no one can worship God for another; that each one must exercise his own faculties in the service of God, and not depend on the exercise of another's faculties. And hence the necessity of a harmonious unity in divine worship, that each individual may participate in the united devotions of the whole body, and mutually contribute to the strength, and share in the harmony of all. Union is the strength of God's people, and the glory of divine worship. Thus united in spirit, and inspired with divine love, a whole assembly can move in harmonious order, and devote the active powers of soul and body to the Giver of all good, while they chant their songs of adoration to their Redeemer, and "praise his name in the dance." What, among all the variety of religious devotions, by which mankind attempt to worship the Eternal God, is more calculated to inspire the soul with heavenly sensations, and give us an idea of the worship of angels! How far from this harmonious worship, are the dull attempts of a congregation, wherein but a small portion of the people are engaged, while the far greater part are entirely silent, inactive and unconcerned!

Who can behold an assembly of people thus united, and thus exercised in the worship of God, and not perceive that they are governed by one spirit? And is not this the one virgin body of Christ to whom the promise alluded? "Then shall the virgin "rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together."* Here both young and old, under the character of the *virgin*, are comforted from their sorrow and "rejoice in the dance." Here is the cleansed sanctuary; and here every vessel, or in other words, every talent which God ever gave his people, tho defiled by the wicked, for many ages, is now purified and restored, in this living temple, the church of the *latter day*.

How clearly this was prefigured by the cleansing of the profaned vessels of the Jewish temple, and restoring them to the second temple! Here the second temple is manifested. In this temple is revealed the ark alluded to in John's vision,† and we have found access to it. The dancing of David and all Israel before the ark, in that day, was typical of the true worship of God, under the gospel dispensation. Then how much greater cause have the true followers of Christ, in the present day, to devote all their ac-

* Jer. xxxi. 13. † Rev. xi. 19.

tive powers to the worship of God, before this spiritual ark which is the real substance.

As the predictions of the prophets, concerning these things, could only be in part fulfilled, in Christ's first appearing, therefore he renewed these predictions, and the promises contained in them. His parable of the prodigal son, alluded expressly to this subject. In this is represented, in a striking light, the state of fallen man. Having "wasted his substance in riotous living," having strayed from God, and abused that light and wasted those talents which his heavenly Father had given him, in doing his own will and seeking his own pleasures, he at length comes to his senses, feels his poverty and laments his folly. Having returned from feeding the swine, quitted the filthy companions of his wickedness, and the miserable gratifications of his carnal nature, he confesses his sins and begs his Father's forgiveness: And being stripped of his old garments of sin and uncleanness, and clad with a robe of righteousness and purity, there is "music and dancing."

But observe the conduct of the elder son: this *music and dancing* is highly offensive to him; and in his anger, he refuses to enter in and partake of the general joy of his father's house, exalts his own righteousness and goodness, condemns his prodigal brother, and accuses his father of injustice.

This character clearly points out the formal professor of religion, who readily acknowledges the manifestation of God in a former day, and strictly adheres to the forms and ordinances of a past dispensation, in which he places all his trust, without regarding any present manifestation of divine light, except with feelings of jealousy and opposition. And tho he may have been faithful for a season; yet, being regardless of any increase of righteousness in his own soul, he loses the Spirit of God, and settles down upon a form of godliness without the power. Such are ever more ready to reject any increasing display of God's work, than those who make no profession of religion.

Jesus Christ testified against the conduct of the high professors of religion in his day, who pretended great zeal in keeping the law given in a former dispensation; but at the same time, rejected his testimony: "Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and harlots "go into the Kingdom of God before you."* But had they been willing to receive his testimony, and enter into the increasing light of his Kingdom, they would not have been excluded: he even "entreated them to come in;" but they refused; as appears evident from his lamentation over Jerusalem: "How often would I "have gathered you, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under "her wings, and ye would not!"† And wherefore did the Jews reject Christ, while, at the same time, they professed such zeal for

* Matt. xxi. 31. † Matt. xxiii. 37.

the law of God? The apostle Paul says, "They being ignorant of "God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own "righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteous-"ness of God."* How clearly this is exemplified in the elder son, who condemned his father's righteousness, and extolled his own!

As the elder son was angry at his father's proceedings, and would not come in, it appears evident that, whatever obedience he might formerly have yielded, he still possessed the carnal mind, which is "enmity against God." Therefore, in applying this character to the formal professor, we may with propriety and justice remark, that whatever degree of confidence he may place in his former righteousness, he never can find his union with the Father, unless he is willing to unite with the increasing light of truth, wherever it is made manifest: and tho the Father should offer him all his possessions, he could never enjoy them so long as he continued in disunion with the Giver.

The parable of the Pharisee and the publican, who went up into the temple to pray, is designed to represent the same characters.† As the Pharisee, like the elder son, justified himself in the observance of formal ceremonies; so the publican, like the prodigal, condemned himself, and begged for mercy: therefore, being the more honest, he was "justified rather than the other;" yet neither of them could be justified, as to their original characters.‡

From such self-justified Pharisees and professors of religion, arises the greatest opposition against any new manifestation of the light of God. The reason is obvious; they fix their sense upon the work of God in some past dispensation, instead of pressing forward to find the light of God before them. Thus the Scribes and Pharisees of that day, had their sense so firmly fixed to the law of Moses, as the foundation of their hope, and the ground of their justification, that they could not hearken to the voice of Jesus

* Rom. x. 3. † See Luke xviii. 10.

‡ Modern Pharisees have grown more artful in their hypocrisy than those of ancient times. Finding that the honest confession of the publican was more acceptable to God than the boasting of the Pharisee, they have learned to counterfeit his character by borrowing his language to cover their hypocrisy. Their language now is, "*God be merciful to me a sinner.* I am a poor sinner—I can do nothing of myself—I rely wholly on the mercy of God—The atoning blood of Christ is all my dependence for salvation," &c. And yet at the same time, they will superstitiously maintain their old forms, and strictly adhere to their human invented creeds and ceremonies, under a profession of christianity, while they continue to follow the course of the world, and walk in the ways of sin; as tho the hypocritical confession of being sinners, were sufficient to propitiate the favor of God, and recommend them to his mercy, without actually forsaking their sins. Thus they are, by profession, *christian sinners.* But such hypocrites ought to remember that, "He that committeth sin, is of the Devil." See 1 John iii. 8.

Christ, "who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one "that believeth;" especially as they found that his righteousness required a greater cross against the fallen nature of man, than was required by the law. And even to this day, the Jews, as a people, have never acknowledged Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah.

The same kind of conduct is observable, in a greater or less degree, among the formal professors of the various denominations, at the present day. After having lost the spirit and power of their religion, by the indulgence of their corrupt propensities, they settle down into a lifeless form, upon some fixed, external principles, established by their first founders, without ever looking forward for any further increase, unless it be that increasing indulgence to the flesh which tends to diminish the cross, and assimilate their religion with the principles and spirit of the world. And so strongly opposed are such professors to every thing that has any appearance of that light and power of God which requires a greater cross against the pride and lust of man, that we generally find the greatest opposition against dancing, as an act of divine worship, to proceed from professors of this description. Yet such characters will generally manifest great zeal for that ceremonious and formal worship which is performed by the tongue only.*

Thus while they are offended at the increasing work of God, they still maintain the character of the elder son, who was unreconciled to the merciful displays of his father's kindness and charity. And yet the same call of the everlasting gospel is extended to them, as freely as to their more prodigal brethren, who, if they are not less sinners, are less blinded by traditional forms of godliness, and therefore have no cloke for their sins. Therefore all are invited upon equal terms: "Come in and share the fatted calf, "the feast of the Lamb; be stripped of your old garments of sin, "and be clad with the robes of righteousness: Come in and rejoice "with your repenting, prodigal brother, and worship God in the "dance."

* See Matt. xv. 8.

PART III.

The Nature of God and his Works of Creation.

CHAPTER 1.

The Attributes of God; their harmony and consistency manifested in God's dealings towards his creatures: the idea of christian sinners *wholly inconsistent with these Attributes.*

Much learned labor has been spent in vain attempts to search out the nature and character of God, and to pry into the attributes of the Almighty; as tho poor sinful man, in his fallen and depraved state, were able, by his own wisdom and understanding, to trace out those qualities which constitute the Almighty God! "Canst "thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Al- "mighty to perfection?"*

The infinite and invisible God can be known only through the medium of Divine Revelation. As far as God in his wisdom sees fit to reveal his true character to man, so far it may be known, but no further. And it is certainly most reasonable and consistent, as well as most just and equitable, that a Being who is infinitely just and righteous, should make the greatest displays of himself to those who, by faith and obedience, approach the nearest to him. Therefore it is not to the learned *Theologist*, immured in the deep recesses of philosophical speculation, that God deigns to reveal himself in his true character; but to those who deny themselves of all ungodliness and every worldly lust, who walk in the paths of righteousness and peace, who are not merely knowers of his word, but doers of his work. Such, and such only, have a just right to look to God for a true knowledge of his Divine character; and such can, with humble confidence, rely on a faithful display of his goodness, without involving themselves in the dark mazes of scepticism, by a pertinacious confidence in their own wisdom and discernment.

To have just conceptions of the real character of that Divine Principle or Being whom we call God, it is necessary to understand the nature of his attributes, which stand in perfect correspondence with each other, and which are fully displayed in his Word and Works, and clearly manifest his Divine perfections. "For "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are "clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made."†

It is certainly most reasonable and consistent with infinite Wisdom, that the image and likeness of God should be most plainly manifested in man, who was made the most noble part of the natural creation. Accordingly we read, "And God said, Let us

* Job xi. 7. † Rom. i. 20.

"make man in our image, after our likeness.—So God created "man in his own image; in the image of God created he him; "male and female created he them." Hence it must appear evident that there exists in the DEITY, the likeness of male and female, forming the unity of that creative and good principle from which proceeds the work of *Father and Mother*, manifested in *Power* to create, and *Wisdom* to bring forth into proper order, all the works of God. If it were not so, then man, who was created male and female, as father and mother, could not, with any propriety, be said to show forth the image and likeness of God. But the manifestation of Father and Mother in the Deity, being spiritual, does not imply two *Persons*, but two *Incomprehensibles*, of one substance, from whom proceed all Divine power and life.*

The Almighty is manifested as proceeding from everlasting, as the *first Source* of all power, and the *fountain* of all good, the *Creator* of all good beings, and is the ETERNAL FATHER; and the Holy Spirit of Wisdom, who was the *Co-worker* with him, from everlasting, is the ETERNAL MOTHER, the *bearing Spirit* of all the works of God. This is according to the testimony of her own inspiration.

"Doth not Wisdom cry?—She crieth at the gates, at the entry "of the city:—"Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the "sons of men. Hear; for I will speak excellent things; and the "opening of my lips shall be right things. I love them that love "me; and those that seek me early shall find me.—I lead in the "way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment.—"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his "works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, "or ever the earth was.—When he prepared the heavens, I was "there: when he set a compass upon the face of the deep: when "he established the clouds above; when he strengthened the foun-"tains of the deep: when he gave the sea his decree, that the "waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed "the foundations of the earth: then was I by him, as one brought "up with him; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always be-"fore him." And again: "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, "and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay "hold upon her; and happy is every one that retaineth her."†

The attributes of God are manifested by the light of Divine revelation, and confirmed by the testimony of eternal truth, through Christ, in this day of his second appearing, and may be stated in the following order.

* This shows something essentially different from "three distinct persons in one God," all in the masculine gender, as established by a council of catholic bishops in the fourth century, and which has been the prevailing creed among their blind and bigoted followers to this day.

† See Prov. chap. viii. and chap. iii. 17, 18, 19.

1. POWER. It is necessary, first of all, that God should possess power sufficient for self-existence and independence, and for the accomplishment of all his works. His power is infinite, and therefore fully competent to perform any thing consistent with his nature. "He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established "the world by his wisdom."*

2. WISDOM. In all the operations of God, *Wisdom* stands connected with *Power:* for without the corresponding operation of Wisdom to direct and bring forth into proper order, nothing could ever be brought to perfection. "The Lord by wisdom hath "founded the earth; by understanding he hath established the "heavens."† Wisdom appears evident in the beauty, order, harmony and perfection of all God's works. "O Lord, how mani- "fold are thy works! in *wisdom* hast thou made them all."‡

3. GOODNESS. The goodness of God is abundantly manifest in its operations towards mankind. "The earth is full of the "goodness of the Lord."|| All the operations and works of God are good, being planned in perfect wisdom, and every way adapted to the respective purposes for which they were intended.

4. LIGHT. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all."¶ Without light, God could never be known to exist; and it is by the operations of light that his works are seen, and his goodness made manifest to his creatures.

5. HOLINESS. The holiness of God is abundantly declared in the scriptures. "O Lord, who is like thee, glorious in holiness?"** Holiness is, in the highest degree, expressive of the perfect purity of the Divine Nature. Nothing unholy or impure belongs to God; and therefore nothing of that nature can ever proceed from God, or be owned and accepted by him.

6. LOVE. God's love is abundantly manifested towards his creatures in the kind dispensations of his Providence, through which they receive all their temporal blessings; and also in the merciful displays of his goodness and tender compassion, whence flow all their spiritual privileges. "God is love; and he that "dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him."††

7. RIGHTEOUSNESS. "The Lord is righteous in all his ways, "and holy in all his works. Righteousness and judgment are the "habitation of his throne.—The heavens declare his righteous- "ness."‡‡ Righteousness is ascribed to God, throughout the scriptures, as a distinguishing attribute, and is peculiarly expressive of the perfect uprightness of his Divine character.

These seven are the only inherent attributes which constitute the very nature and essence of God, as revealed to man, and from which all others proceed.

* Jer. x. 12. † Prov. iii, 19. ‡ Psa. civ, 24. || Psa xxxiii. 5.
¶ 1 John i, 5. ** Exod. xv, 11. †† 1 John iv. 16. ‡‡ Psa. xcvii, 2, 6, and cxlv. 17.

All other attributes or principles, with every thing pertaining to Godliness, may be considered as comprehended in, and proceeding from these seven. *Justice*, tho an essential attribute of God, is so intimately connected with his Righteousness, that they, in effect, form but one. *Righteousness*, is that which is inherently right and equitable in God. *Justice* is a display of that which is right and equitable towards his creatures. *Mercy* is also an essential attribute; but it proceeds from *goodness* and *love:* for wherever God, from his infinite goodness and love, administers his gifts in tender compassion to the needs of his creatures, there is a display of *mercy*. *Understanding* and *knowledge* are the operations of *Wisdom* and *Light*, without which there could be no understanding nor knowledge.

As to the terms *omnipotence*, *omniscience* and *omnipresence*, so much used among theologists, and which they consider as terms expressive of Divine Attributes, it may be proper to remark that, *omnipotence* is only another name for *Almighty Power;* and that *omniscience* implies a knowledge of all things, and of course, proceeds from *Wisdom* and *Light*. *Omnipresence* cannot properly be called an attribute. Undoubtedly, "the eyes of the Lord are "in every place, beholding the evil and the good;" but God's *essential presence* cannot be in any evil work. Some talk of God's *infinity*, *eternity* and *unchangeableness*, as essential attributes; but this seems to be a distinction in terms, more calculated to bewilder the mind than to enlighten the understanding. By a little reflection we may easily perceive that, if "God is infinite, eternal "and unchangeable in his Being," which all must admit, then all his attributes must, of necessity, be *infinite*, all must be *eternal*, and all *unchangeable;* and hence arises his independence of all other beings, and his sovereignty over all.

Truth is the declarative attribute of God, which proceeds from all his other attributes, and by which they are all declared and made manifest, and without which man could know nothing of God. "Thy word is truth."* In Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is the Truth, was manifested the real character of God: "For in him "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead (or Deity) bodily."† That is, in him was manifested the very nature of those attributes, and in this sense, God dwelt in him. We read that, "Our God is "a consuming fire."‡ This includes every attribute of God; and these, being all manifested by the truth, operate like fire, and will finally consume and destroy whatever is contrary to the nature of God. It is also declared in the scriptures, that "God is a Spirit;" or rather, according to the original, *God is Spirit*. All his attributes are spiritual: He is that infinite and eternal Fountain whence proceeds all spiritual blessings to all his creatures. Hence he is

* John xvii, 17. † Col. ii, 9. ‡ Heb. xii, 29.

the only proper object of spiritual worship. "*God is Spirit*, and they that worship him, must worship in spirit and in truth."*

It is worthy of notice that the seven attributes, already mentioned as inherent in the nature of God, have been particularly figured out, in many remarkable instances, both in God's works of creation and providence. All God's works are a manifestation of these attributes; all scripture and divine revelation bear testimony to them. They are "*the seven Spirits of God*," which were represented by John, as "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne."† It is by the operation of these only, that any thing of God can be seen; and without these, nothing could ever be discovered or known of him: for no other light ever comes from God, but through the operation of these seven attributes. Hence the foundation of the number *seven*, so often used in scripture, in representing the works of God and sacred things.

"And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne stood a Lamb "as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which "are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth."‡ It is well known that the *Lamb* is a title which, in the language of scripture, is often applied to Jesus Christ. A *horn*, in the figurative style of the prophets, signifies *power* or *strength*. These seven horns of the Lamb represent the power or strength of those seven Spirits or attributes of God, by which all his works are performed. The seven eyes represent their spiritual light and discernment. This vision of John clearly shows that in Christ, is manifested the brightness of his Father's glory; and that in and through him, are displayed all those attributes, by which he is able to reveal the true nature and character of God, and to declare his name and perform his work through the world; and in this manner, and for this purpose, are "the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the "earth."

By this we may see, not only that all the manifestations of God to man are revealed in and through Christ; but also that all the gifts and blessings which come from God, and are sent forth to man, are evidently the operations of the spirit and substance of these attributes: and certain it is, that nothing which is inconsistent with these attributes can ever flow from God.

John saw, in vision, the Son of God walking in the midst of "*seven golden candlesticks*," and holding in his right hand "*seven* "*stars*. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; "and the seven golden candlesticks are the seven churches."|| This vision has a direct reference to the same foundation upon which these seven churches were built, and upon which the true church of Christ must ever be built. Stars are emblematical of the heavenly light and glory of the angelic order, which is founded

* John iv, 24. † Rev. iv, 5. ‡ Rev. v, 6. || See Rev. i, 12, to the end, & ii, 1.

and established, under the government of Christ, on these seven principles. The Son of God, being in possession of the seven Spirits or attributes of God, and having power and dominion over the seven churches of Asia, which were nourished and supported by these attributes, may, by a figurative representation, be said to hold the seven stars in his right hand, and to walk in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.

The *seven seals*, which were opened by the Lamb, have their foundation in these seven attributes, or Spirits of God: for the true nature and operation of these attributes were never known until revealed by the Lamb. The *seven angels* with the *seven trumpets;* and also the *seven angels* with the *seven vials* of the wrath of God, all show the same order which appears in all God's works.*

The work of God, from the beginning, all came forth in this order. The heavens and the earth were created in six days, and were ended and blessed and sanctified on the seventh; because on that day God rested from all his work. And thus were the seven days of the week established by the Creator, conformable to the seven attributes of the Deity. The sacred institution of the sabbath, by which the seventh day was set apart and sanctified by Divine authority, as a day of blessing and rest, was not only a standing memorial to the chosen tribes of Israel, of God's having rested from his work on that day; but it was also figurative of the final blessing and rest of the saints, which will be effected by the final display of God's attribute of Righteousness and Justice, when "the righteous shall shine forth as the sun, in the Kingdom "of their Father."†

Finally: Man, both in his natural and moral constitution, was created in the same order. His five natural senses, together with the two faculties of speech and understanding, make seven, and constitute him a natural man. These seven natural faculties are more or less perceptible throughout the animal creation. In the two last, however, man evidently stands preeminent; yet these faculties are all natural and corporeal, depending on the life of the animal body, and the constitutional soundness of the parts they occupy.‡ But man, in his moral constitution, is also endowed with seven rational powers or faculties, corresponding with the

* See Rev, chap, v, 8, & 16. † Matt, xiii, 43

‡ That these seven faculties are natural and corporeal, is evident from the circumstance that each one is separately liable to be more or less effected, and even destroyed, by a disorganization of that part of the human body in which that particular faculty is seated. A man may lose his hearing by the disorganization, or disorder of the ears; he may also lose his sight by a disorder of the eyes; and so also of the faculties of feeling, tasting, smelling and speech; and even his understanding depends on a proper organization of the brain. Hence, by a disorder of the brain, many lose their understanding, and become insane, delirious or crazy.

seven attributes in Deity. These being implanted in him, according to the spiritual order of his creation, properly constitute his rational soul, and bear witness of the true nature of the Creator. In this sense, man was created in the image and likeness of God, and was constituted God's representative in the natural creation. This is agreeable to the testimony of Solomon: "Wisdom hath "builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars."* This evidently alludes to the seven rational powers of man, who was eminently designed to be the house or habitation of Wisdom.

Thus man, in his sphere of action, became as God, capable of exercising to good purposes, and to the extent of his limited capacity, all the attributes of God, with which he was endowed by his Creator; and also capable, by the perversion of his natural faculties to base purposes, of darkening and debasing his moral attributes, and thus rendering his rational soul subservient to his animal propensities. Herein he was made independent, as to his choice of good and evil, being left as free to act within the narrow limits of his sphere, as God his Creator. Hence arose his accountability. For, being the offspring of God, from whom he received his natural and moral faculties, and by whom he was placed as God's representative on earth, it was absolutely necessary that he should improve those powers and faculties to the honor and glory of his Creator, and in obedience to his will, as the only means of gaining honor to himself, and of answering the end of his creation.

God having constituted man a reasonable, intelligent being, capable of knowing and doing his will, addresses him as such. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord:—If ye "be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land."† Man is not required to believe nor practice that which is contrary to the plain and obvious dictates of right reason. Right reason has its foundation in the acknowledged attributes of God; otherwise it is not right reason: for no one can with propriety call that *right* which is known to be contrary to *righteousness*.

In all the works of God there is a perfect consistency, and all his manifestations to man are perfectly reasonable. The operations of all his attributes are displayed in the most perfect harmony and correspondence with each other. "It is impossible for "God to lie:" for he is "a God of truth, and without iniquity, "just and right is he."‡ It is therefore impossible that he should devise any plan, fix any decree, or perform any work which would operate against any one of his attributes. His attribute of *Power* can never operate against that of *Wisdom*. His *Justice*, which necessarily proceeds from *Righteousness*, can never be sacrificed to *mercy*, nor can *mercy* be sacrificed to *justice*. Nor can his

* Prov. iv, 1. † Isa. i, 18, 19. ‡ Heb. vi, 18, & Deut. xxxii, 4.

Power, with all his sovereignty and independence, or any thing pertaining to his character, ever operate against *Truth, Goodness, Light, Holiness* or *Love.*

The want of just conceptions concerning the character of God, as manifested in his attributes, has been the cause of the many different opinions which prevail among mankind, respecting divine things. Hence it is that people in the pursuit of religion, are so often led to adopt false principles, and establish themselves upon a wrong foundation. And false principles, when once adopted as divine truths, have a delusive tendency; and however inconsistent with the plain dictates of right reason, they are very apt to obtain a strong hold in the mind, and, like an inveterate disease, are very difficult to eradicate, especially when supported by the authority of great names, and confirmed by length of time.

We have a striking example of the truth of this remark in that unqualified doctrine, maintained by many, who affirm that God, as an independent, Almighty Sovereign, has a just right to do what he pleases, and can, consistent with that right, sentence to eternal misery, many millions of souls who never were favored with the light of the gospel. This soul-sickening doctrine, which had its origin in the regions of antichristian darkness, has caused thousands, and perhaps millions, to blaspheme the very name of God, as a Being of infinite injustice and cruelty. The Almighty has truly a right to do what he will; but it is impossible that he should ever *will* any thing which is inconsistent with his attribute of *Righteousness*, or with any attribute of his nature: for this would at once destroy the harmony of his attributes, and render him an inconsistent and changeable Being.

All doctrines which represent God as making any difference in the future state of his rational creatures, respecting their salvation or damnation, without a special regard to their works, and all the reasons advanced in support of such doctrines, are falacious and unfounded, and ought to be rejected as inconsistent with the attribute of *righteousness* and *justice.* Such doctrines, being fraught with the greatest possible evil to the creature, are equally inconsistent with *goodness.* They also operate against the attribute of *light:* for no doctrine ever produced a more darkening and discouraging effect upon the mind of man. To suppose the fate of man irrevocably fixed, must necessarily discourage all attempts to alter it by any good which it is in his power to do. Such a doctrine must not only greatly obscure the benevolent and glorious character of the Deity, in the eyes of his rational creatures; but render him more like a tyrannical devil who delights in the misery of his creatures, than like a good, merciful and gracious God, "who "hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked."*

* Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

All doctrines which maintain that gloomy opinion, that a man, when called by the gospel, may be in doubt as to the knowledge of such a call, and cannot positively see and know his duty, nor discern the certainty of the way of life and salvation, or that he can be a follower of Christ and not know it, are inconsistent with the attributes of light and knowledge. "For God who command-"ed the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts."* Jesus saith, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me "shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."† Hence the very message of the gospel to souls was designed, "To "open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, and from "the power of Satan unto God."‡ "If any man will do his will, "he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God"|| Here is neither doubt nor supposition expressed, but a positive declaration of Jesus Christ, who hath declared himself "the way, the truth "and the life."‡‡

Hence it is evident that the plain and obvious reason why so many professing christians of the present day, do not positively know the way, the truth and the life, is, *they do not do the will of God:* for those who do his will, are in the way; and to do his will is indeed the only way. Therefore, those who express such doubts, are evidently witnesses against themselves, that they are not in the way.

The doctrine of *christian sinners*, or the idea of christians' living in sin, so strenuously advocated by many, is utterly inconsistent with every attribute of God. All doctrines which imply that real christians cannot live without sin, are inconsistent with the attributes of *power* and *goodness*, and indeed with every Divine attribute. "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not; whosoever "sinneth, hath not seen him, nor known him. He that committeth "sin is of the devil."¶ The opinion which prevails so extensively among mankind, that no man, not even a real christian, is able to live without committing sin, is one of the most destructive errors that ever proceeded from the powers of darkness. It strikes directly against a life of holiness, and is calculated to discourage all attempts in the pursuit of virtue: for what inducement can any man have to pursue that which he believes it impossible to obtain? He who imbibes the principle, that it is impossible to obtain power over sin, will soon find that every spring of his carnal nature is ready to cherish the deception, and check the reproaches of conscience.

If then, this principle is so agreeable to the "carnal mind," which the apostle declares to be "enmity against God;"** surely it cannot proceed from God. The very work which Christ came

* 2 Cor iv. 6. † John viii. 12. ‡ Acts xxvi. 18. || John vii. 17;
‡‡ John xiv. 6. ¶ 1 John iii. 6 & 8. ** Rom. viii. 7.

into the world to do, was to take away sin—"to save his people "from their sins."* Was then the object of his mission unattainable? Was he sent into the world to undertake a work which he was unable to accomplish? By no means. His own testimony proves that his power was sufficient for the work. "All power "is given unto me in Heaven and in earth."† If then, all power is given him, and if the very object of his mission was "to save "his people from their sins," why are not these *christian sinners* saved from sin? for if they are christians indeed, they must be Christ's people. Besides; he has promised explicitly; "All things "whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."‡ Again; "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall "ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."‖

Thus it appears that Christ's power is sufficient; and surely no one will pretend that he is unfaithful in his promises: What then? Is he deficient in goodness and love? By no means. All professing christians will readily acknowledge his goodness and love. Is he unable to discern the devices and stratagems of Satan, so as to counteract them and protect his people? Certainly not: for this would exclude the attributes of wisdom and light; and the apostle Paul declared Christ to be "the *power* of God, and the *wisdom* of "God:"¶ and Christ himself, as before observed, testified, saying, "*I am the light of the world:* he that followeth me shall not walk "in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Here we find nothing deficient on the part of Christ; yet these *sinning christians* still continue to walk in darkness and live in sin, and plead the impossibility of doing otherwise; and yet they name the name of Christ, and claim the character of christians! But what title have they to this character? If the testimony of Christ be true, they cannot possibly be his followers, while they live in sin and walk in darkness.

The attribute of Divine Love is readily acknowledged by all the professors of christianity; and many, even among these sinning christians, profess to share bountifully in the love of God. But if they really possess the true love of God, which is indeed the most certain evidence that they are beloved of God, why does not this love keep them from sinning? "If ye love me, keep my com-"mandments," said Jesus; and surely there can be no sin in keeping his commandments. "No good thing will God withhold from "them that walk uprightly."** Do these christians walk uprightly? or does God withhold his goodness? Surely they cannot impeach the goodness of God. If they really possess his love, they must also possess his goodness: for these are so intimately connected together, that they cannot be separated. Why then are they not

* Matt. i. 21. † Matt. xxviii 18. ‡ Matt. xxi. 22. ‖ John xv. 7.
¶ 1 Cor. i. 24. ** Psa. lxxxiv. 11.

delivered from sin? Can sin abide with God's love and goodness? Can righteousness have fellowship with unrighteousness? Can light have communion with darkness?* As well might Satan dwell in a tabernacle of holiness.

The Spirit of God is holy; but sin is unholy. Hence the holiness of God is opposed to sin; therefore, wherever the Spirit of holiness operates, it must effectually exclude sin; unless where sin is more powerful than holiness; and there it must equally exclude holiness: for they can never abide together in any soul. Hence we must conclude that sin has dominion over these sinning christians, being more powerful in them than the Spirit of holiness: for that which is most powerful must have the dominion. But holiness must then be excluded: for they cannot dwell together. And if the sins of these christians exclude God's holiness, they must exclude his goodness and love, yea, and his righteousness also, together with every attribute pertaining to the nature of God. If this be done, what then becomes of their christianity?

The apostle Paul, in writing to the church of Corinth, expresses himself in these words; "Know ye not that ye are the temple of "God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" and then adds, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for "the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."† Thus it appears that some of these Corinthian christians to whom Paul addressed himself, had, at least, a measure of the Spirit of God dwelling in them; and it was evidently the apostle's desire to keep them in the Spirit of God. Hence his warning; "If any man de- "file the temple of God, him will God destroy." Did these christians then live in sin? Certainly not while the Spirit of God dwelt in them. Why then cannot christians of the present day live without sin? Was God more partial to the primitive christians than he now is to modern christians? This would exclude his attribute of righteousness.

"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God?" Does he deal unjustly with his people? Does he hold out promises of reward to the faithful and upright, who are willing to bear the cross of Christ, and deny themselves of all ungodliness and every worldly lust; and, at the same time, withhold from them his power and goodness, with all the means of gaining power and victory over sin; and yet threaten destruction to the soul that defileth himself with sin? To suppose that God can deal thus with his people is, in effect, to deny, not only his attribute of righteousness, but also his power and wisdom, his goodness and love, his mercy and truth, and in short, it is to deny every thing that pertains to the holy Spirit of God.

Thus it appears that the impious and soul-destroying doctrine

* See 2 Cor. vi. 14, † 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17.

of *christian-sinners*, or the impossibility of living without sin, excludes every attribute of Deity, and renders Christ's mission into the world a mere nullity, and throws the responsibility of the creature's sin directly back upon the Creator. But let no man deceive himself: God is not mocked. The sinner can never escape responsibility in this way. The righteousness of God will yet be displayed before all people; and the living power of *eternal truth* will manifest every attribute of God to be what it really is, to the shame and confusion of sinners, and to the destruction of all their works.

Therefore, let all those christians who plead the impossibility of living without sin, faithfully examine the subject, and they will find that the deficiency is not in God, who is All-sufficient; that it is not in Christ in whom dwells the fulness of the Divine attributes; but in their own faithless hearts. They do not believe it possible to live without sin; because they have never received that power. And why have they never received it? Because they do not "ask "in prayer, believing that they shall receive;" because they do not faithfully and honestly take up a full and final cross against sin; because they do not believe in the promises of Christ; because they do not abide in Christ; and because his word does not abide in them. These are the true causes why they cannot live without sin.

"Without faith it is impossible to please God."* Then what sort of christians must these be who are so destitute of faith? Surely they cannot be the faithful followers of Christ: for they do not believe it possible for any one to live without sin; therefore they content themselves with living in it; and this they find to be most agreeable to their carnal inclinations. Thus they cherish their own delusions. Tho such christians will often ascribe *holiness to the Lord* with their tongues, and declare his *goodness* in the highest strains of eloquence; yet in their practice they will deny both. Even in their prayers, they will extol to the heavens the glory of his *righteousness* and *justice*, his *mercy* and *truth*; while in their doctrines, they implicitly deny in him, the very existence of these attributes.

"Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this "seal. The Lord knoweth them that are his. And let every one "that nameth the name of Christ, depart from iniquity."† Such, and such only, are known of God in the great work of salvation; and such only are sealed with the Lamb, and stand on Mount Zion.

* Heb. xi. 6. † 2 Tim. ii. 19.

CHAPTER II.

Concerning the Decrees of God, Election and Reprobation.

THE Decrees of God have, for many ages, employed the pens and tongues of many professed divines, and great controversies have been excited and maintained on this subject; but the differences of opinion still remain without producing much light to mankind, except that of discovering the darkness and ignorance of the disputants.

Many arguments have been drawn from certain passages of scripture to prove that God, by an unalterable decree, and without any respect to faith or good works, has elected a certain portion of the human race to eternal salvation, and reprobated the remainder to eternal damnation. Hence we hear much about the doctrine of election and reprobation, from those preachers and writers who build their tenets on these favorite passages. But it is to be lamented that there are so many, in this enlightened age, "who minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in "faith; desiring to be teachers; yet understanding neither what "they say, nor whereof they affirm;"* who presume to maintain doctrines so contrary to the liberal and righteous principles of the gospel, and so inconsistent with the true character of God.

As it is by Divine revelation, that the true character of God is made known to man; so a true knowledge of his decrees, as far as they relate to what he requires of man, are known only by revelation. But those decrees by which, in the beginning, God established the laws of creation, and by which the works of creation and providence are governed, tho they are beyond the reach of man, yet their existence is readily ascertained and confirmed by their visible effects. And by these effects, the rational mind may easily be led to believe, what none can deny, that God works by an unalterable plan of wisdom, which necessarily produces an unchangeable order and regularity in all his *visible* works. And hence we must rationally conclude that all his *invisible* works are under the same established laws; and that they all must and do operate with the greatest order and harmony, and in the end, will most certainly accomplish all his divine purposes in perfect wisdom and righteousness.

The decrees of God, so far as they are made manifest, either by Divine revelation, or by their visible effects in the natural world, are of two kinds. The first are those which respect God's own established and determinate laws and purposes, whether they relate to man, or to any other part of the creation. The second are those which God has given to man, for his protection, and which are calculated and designed to prove his faithfulness and obedience.

* 1 Tim. i. 4 & 7.

First. Those decrees which respect God's own established laws and purposes, comprehend not only the works of creation and providence, but the final event of whatever he has designed. In the works of creation, it is obvious that God has established laws which are unalterable, except by the same Almighty Power which first established them. Among these we may reckon the established order, courses and relative situation of the sun, moon and stars, together with the whole planetary system; the order and courses of the seasons, and the laws of nature by which they are governed; heat and cold, light and darkness, the powers of procreation and vegetation, the laws of gravitation, attraction and repulsion, with every thing which depends on the established laws of nature: these are known by their visible effects.

Also God's determinate purposes, relative to the operation of his divine attributes with respect to man. Among these may be mentioned the decree of his *power*, in creating man a moral agent, perfectly capable of exercising his moral faculties in choosing and acting according to the dictates of his own mind, in doing good or evil. Also the decree of his *wisdom*, in placing man in a state of probation, and giving him a fair trial, that he might prove himself in the choice of good or evil, without any influence, on either side, more than what he was fully able to resist or follow, according to his own free choice. And also the decree of his *goodness*, by which he determined, after the fall, to extend mercy to man, and send a Redeemer to redeem him from his fallen state, and raise him to a heavenly Paradise, of which the earthly paradise, from which he fell, was but a figure.

Man being still endowed with the faculty of free agency, notwithstanding his fall, by which he was brought into darkness and bondage, God, who is the *source of light*, decreed to afford him a sufficient degree of light to see and appreciate, in some measure, the benefits to be obtained by accepting the offers of salvation, through the mediation of the Redeemer; that he might be at no loss respecting his duty and privilege, in choosing for himself, nor respecting the course of life to be pursued, in order to obtain salvation through this medium. In his *holiness* he decreed that man, by a life of holiness, which he might obtain by obedience, should find an entrance into the mansions of holiness; and he decreed at the same time, that "without holiness no man should see the Lord." In his *love* he also decreed, that the blessings of his love should attend the faithful and obedient. And in his *righteousness and justice*, he decreed a crown of righteousness, as the just reward of all who should walk in the way of righteousness and peace; and this decree necessarily excludes the disobedient from any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ.

These are the unalterable decrees of God, and all who are wil-

ling to accept the benefits of these decrees, are freely entitled to them, in the line of obedience; but God has decreed that they shall not be obtained in any other way. By a careful examination of these decrees, we can see nothing in them but what is perfectly just and reasonable, and perfectly consistent with infinite wisdom and goodness; and they certainly display, in very striking colors, the great perfection and glory of the Divine Attributes. The fixed and unalterable nature of these decrees, by no means renders them unreasonable or unjust; but the contrary. Even those which more immediately respect man, show forth the unchangeable goodness of God, by their permanence, and are rendered infinitely valuable, by being unalterable.

When we consider that God is infinitely wise and powerful, that "he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works," and that he is perfectly free and independent, it must appear perfectly consistent, just and reasonable, that he should create man a moral agent, perfectly free to choose and act for himself, independent of any supernatural impulse. Herein appears man's divine origin. And where is the man who is willing to have his moral freedom and independence taken from him, and to be compelled to think and act according to the dictates of some other being, without any choice or will of his own, and at the same time, to be made accountable for his thoughts, words and actions.

But this cannot be: for God has endowed man with moral agency, and it cannot be taken from him; it is fixed by an unalterable decree; and tho intolerant Popes and ecclesiastical persecutors have often attempted it, even by the power of fire and sword, and every implement of torture; yet they never could control the moral powers of man, nor deprive him of his free agency. They have sometimes, indeed, compelled people to speak and act the hypocrite, in order to escape punishment or gain favor; but they never could destroy his moral agency, nor extinguish the light of his conscience. They may indeed bind, imprison or kill the body; but they cannot fetter the thoughts, nor destroy the soul. As well might they attempt to arrest the sun in its progress through the sky, or change the course of the stars.

Second. Those decrees which God has given to man for his protection, and which are calculated and designed to prove his faithfulness and obedience. Such was his decree to Adam: "In "the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." Such was his decree to the Jews, by the mouth of the prophet Isaiah: "If "ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land."* And such was the testimony of Jesus Christ: "If any man will "do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God."† This may also apply to any command, or any established law of

* Isa. i. 19. † John vii. 17.

God, for the government of his people, which requires their obedience; and in case of disobedience, exposes them to suffer the penalty decreed by that law.

The decrees of God which require the obedience of man, consist in the declaration of his mind and will, concerning their duty, and are manifested by divine revelation, either mediately or immediately. His decree to Adam respecting the forbidden fruit, was direct and positive. His decrees to the people of Israel, through Moses, Joshua and the judges and prophets, were positive, and the promises conditional; yet punishments or sufferings of some kind followed disobedience. Adam and Eve violated the decree of God to them, and therefore they fell from their union with God: for the decree could not be altered. A decree may be permanent and unalterable, or it may be temporary and alterable. Decrees which are temporary and alterable, are given according to the existing circumstances of those to whom they are given; but the annulling of them argues no changeableness in the Giver, it only shows a change of the circumstances which occasioned the decree. God's laws are his decrees, and they may be permanent and unconditional, or temporal and conditional. A sovereign may enact laws for the government of his people, which may be repealable; yet while they exist, they are positive, and must be obeyed. So it is with many decrees given for the government of God's people.

The doctrine so strongly maintained, and so extensively believed, that God decreed the fall of man, is most unreasonable and inconsistent. If God decreed that man should sin, then man could not be at all culpable. If he fulfilled God's decree in eating the forbidden fruit, then he must have done the will of God, and therefore did not commit sin in so doing: for it cannot be sin to do the will of God, and God cannot decree any thing contrary to his will; therefore he cannot decree that man shall commit sin. Such a decree would indeed be contrary to every attribute of his nature. The command of God to Adam, was his law; in keeping that law, he could not sin: "for sin is a transgression of the law." The command was given to prove Adam's obedience, and protect him from evil. In transgressing the command, he violated the law of God, and that occasioned his fall.

If sin is a transgression of the laws of God, as the scriptures declare, and God's decrees are his laws, as all must acknowledge; then it follows, that God never decreed that man should sin: for, to say that he decreed that man should sin, is to say that sin is not a transgression of his laws, but a compliance with them, and therefore, *sin is not sin;* which is a contradiction. Again: If God did decree that man should commit sin, then sin must have been agreeable to the will of God: for God cannot, without an absolute inconsistency, decree any thing which is contrary to his will. Hence

the sin cannot be imputed to man; it must be imputed to the will of God; consequently no condemnation can fall on man, seeing he did the will of God. This involves the same absurdity, namely, *sin is not sin!* Such are the inconsistencies which necessarily flow from this soul-darkening, this heaven-blaspheming doctrine, which had its origin in the regions of antichristian darkness.

Again: God could not interpose his power to prevent the fall of man, or to prevent him from sinning, whether he would or not; because this would, at once, have deprived man of the trial of his obedience, and of all accountableness, by fixing an insurmountable barrier to prevent in him the power of transgression. In this case man could never have been the subject of praise nor blame; he never could have known the power nor the extent of his own free agency; he never could have enjoyed the glorious reward of faithfulness, nor have felt the dishonor and shame of unfaithfulness; having no law which he could, of his own choice, obey or disobey, his conduct, in all things, must, of course, have been impelled by Almighty power, like the stars in their courses. This would have deprived man of the power of self-action, and rendered him a mere machine.

Man was created a moral agent, at the beginning: that is, he was endowed with free-agency, capable of acting according to his own voluntary choice, without any compulsion, either of good or evil: and his having good and evil set before him, was that which constituted his state of trial. God assumed no compelling power over him; and the devil could have none, without the man's previous consent. He was therefore, in this respect, left entirely without control.

But it may be asked, whence came the choice of evil? This may be answered in short: It was insinuated by the tempter. The temptation was first addressed to the mind: "Ye shall be as Gods;" and thence applied to the animal propensities, which were inferior to the rational powers. The faculties of the soul, being superior to those of the body, ought to have had the government. But when the man's animal sensations were addressed, and excited by the temptation, tho he possessed a governing power in the faculties of his soul; yet he gave up that power, and gave loose to his animal desires, and under their excitement, yielded to the temptation. This occasioned his fall; and hence the loss which ensued. He proved himself unfaithful to his trust, and the curse followed as the inevitable consequence.

Some will argue, that because God is omniscient and knows all things, even before they come to pass, he must of course foreordain that they shall come to pass. But this consequence does not follow; it is taking for granted, that which cannot be proved; namely; that God cannot foreknow that such an event will come to

pass, without first foreordaining that it shall come to pass: thus making his foreknowledge to depend on a previous decree.

But if God possesses almighty power; if in him "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;" then he must certainly be able to endow man with perfect freedom, and render him perfectly independent, as to his power of choosing or refusing, without any constraint of the foreknowledge or decrees of God. And certain it is, that there is nothing in the foreknowledge of God which can operate, either directly or indirectly, against the free and final choice of any soul, in respect to the work of salvation: for this would be predestination in very deed. To say that God cannot foreknow without foreordaining "whatsoever comes to pass," is to limit his attributes of *power* and *wisdom*, and subject them to his *decrees*, making his decrees, which are evidently the effect of his power and wisdom, superior to both; this is, in reality, making the effect superior to the cause, and placing the common absurd doctrine of predestination above the Divine attributes.

The advocates of unconditional decrees readily admit, that God is able to give his creatures intelligence and volition, and to endow them with the power of thought and action; because this appears too evident to be denied. But still they contend that the operation of these faculties, is immediately dependent on a supernatural impulse; because they cannot conceive how God can confer on man an independence of this kind; or in other words, how he can give man the power to chuse and refuse, according to his own will, independent of his Maker's influence. Herein they discover their contracted ideas of Divine Power and Wisdom. But man's reason and observation, where they are not blinded by the dark mists of antichristian doctrines, might teach him that, according to what is made manifest in the works of the visible creation, "the Power "of God and the Wisdom of God" must extend infinitely beyond all human conception. This truth may be illustrated by a comparison.

It is well known that a clock, being constructed on certain mechanical principles, is able to keep time without the maker's assistance; and tho the maker cannot confer the power of intelligence and volition on his clock, so as to enable it to go right or wrong, of its own choice; yet it is capable of keeping time, according to the principles of its construction, independent of the maker, even were he a thousand miles distant. And since it is admitted, that God can and does confer the power of intelligence and volition on man, why should it appear unreasonable to suppose that he, as an Almighty Creator, can render that intelligence and volition perfectly free and independent of his own influence, or the influence of any other being, as easily as a clock can be made to keep time independent of its maker?

God is not only able to endow man with perfect freedom and independence, in this respect, but he has in truth done it; and herein consists man's free agency, and his accountability. For if the mind of man were not free, if its action depended on some foreign influence, whether that influence came from God, or some other being, the man could not be a free agent, and therefore not accountable for his conduct. But man being a free agent, and having received the law of his Creator, by which he is taught how to govern his conduct aright, that law is the decree of God to him; in obeying that decree, he finds justification before God; in violating it, he becomes a transgressor.

Altho man is indebted to his Creator for the power of intelligence and volition, as well as for all his power and faculties of every kind; and altho he is continually dependent on the providence of God, for all the benefits and privileges he enjoys; yet without the power to exercise and improve all these gifts, to good or evil purposes, according to a free choice of his own, independent of any external or foreign influence, he could not be accountable for his conduct. But being honored of God, with this most important and highly exalted trust, he is therefore highly responsible to his Maker for a faithful discharge of his duty; and herein appears his great accountability.

The doctrine of particular election and reprobation, so called, which maintains that God, by his omnipotent decrees, "has, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life," and doomed others to eternal damnation, without any regard to faith or good works, is supposed to be confirmed by certain passages of scripture, which its advocates, contrary to all truth and right reason, have seen fit to interpret in that sense. But it appears evident from all that we have seen written and published on this subject, by its most strenuous advocates, that they are entirely ignorant of the true sense and import of those passages. Certain it is, that nothing recorded in the scriptures, on the subject of election or predestination, has any reference to the final lot of any souls, without a special regard to their faith and works. There is not a single passage of scripture advanced in support of this doctrine, but what will easily admit of a reasonable explanation, consistent with the free agency of man; while on the other hand, there are many passages which are direct and positive in the support of free agency, and which cannot consistently admit of any other explanation; but for brevity's sake we shall only notice the few following:

1. "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; there- "fore chuse life, that both thou and thy seed may live."* Here is a positive declaration of God, through Moses, to the children of

* Deut. xxx. 19

Israel, that he had set before them the free and uncontrolled choice of good and evil; and that their reward of life or death depended, not on any predestinated decree, but on their good or evil works, freely done: for God is a God of righteousness and truth. But to say that God had before determined to fix their choice by any secret decree,* is to make this declaration a most glaring imposition upon their faith and understanding, which is wholly inconsistent with the righteousness and goodness of God.

2. "What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the "land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and "the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord "God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in "Israel."† This proverb is founded on the same principle with that which maintains, that because Adam partook of the forbidden fruit, it is just and right for God, by an arbitrary decree, to damn all his children, without any regard to their works, or rather for works which they were impelled to do by irresistable necessity; and that if any are saved, it must be through a partial election, by the same arbitrary decrees. But if this be really the case, we certainly have still occasion to use this proverb, notwithstanding the positive declaration of Jehovah to the contrary. Thus we may see that this preposterous doctrine has a direct tendency to impeach the character of the God of justice and truth.

3. "The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and "the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.—Yet ye say, "The way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Is-"rael! Is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?"‡ What can render the way of God more unequal than the doctrine of unconditional decrees? On the other hand, what can be more equal, just and reasonable, than to reward all souls *according to their works*, whether good or evil?

4. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the "death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and "live."|| What can be more plain and positive? It is impossible that God should foreordain any thing contrary to his own will and pleasure. If therefore, God has foreordained that man should commit sin, for which he must die, then, of course he certainly must have pleasure in the death of the wicked. Here again, we may see that the forementioned doctrine not only charges God with the height of injustice, but with the grossest deception and falsehood towards his rational creatures.

But it may be objected by some, that, as these declarations were made under the law, they only concerned this life, and not the

* It is the height of folly to talk and write as many ecclesiastics do, of God's *secret decrees*; for who was ever able to discover his secret decrees? If indeed they are discovered, then they are no longer secret.

† Ezek. xviii. 2, 3. ‡ Ezek. xviii. 20 & 25. || Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

final state of the soul; and that unconditional election was in Christ, which respected the eternal state of all souls. But we would ask, Are God's ways more just and equal to men in their temporal, than in their eternal state? Is he more favorable to the bodies, than to the souls of men? Even this supposition can by no means remove the inconsistency of the doctrine, nor lessen the absurdity of the argument advanced in its support. But the declarations and promises under the gospel are equally plain and positive.

5. "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and "I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; "for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest to your "souls."* Here is a positive call, and a positive promise, to all who will obey it. Where then is the decree that can hinder the fulfilment of this promise, aside from the unwillingness of mankind to comply with the call? Has God decreed that they shall not be willing to comply? Then the call must be a mere mockery—a vain pretence, to deceive souls into a belief that the gospel was intended for all, when in fact, only a part were to be saved by it; while the rest, after being mocked with a pretence that the grace of God was free for all, and that the call of Christ extended to all, without exception, were to be eternally damned! Such are the natural and necessary consequences of that blasphemous doctrine of unconditional decrees, which have been forged in the tyrannical school of Antichrist, and palmed upon the God of righteousness and truth.

6. "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; "but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteous-"ness, is accepted with him."† This testimony of the apostle Peter is directly to the point, and shows plainly who will be elected, and what the conditions are. *He that feareth God, and worketh righteousness.* But if God has, in fact, decreed the final lot of all souls, "from all eternity," and has unconditionally elected some to salvation, and others to damnation, which necessarily fixes an eternal difference between them, he must, in this case, be the greatest respecter of persons, and must display the greatest possible partiality and injustice towards his rational creatures.

7. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some "men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not wil-"ling that any should perish, but that all should come to repen-"tance."‡ Here again, we have another plain testimony of the same apostle. If therefore, God is "not willing that any should perish," and yet has foreordained, by an unconditional decree, that any part should perish, that any part should not come to repentance, then he must have passed this decree against his own

* Matt. xi. 28, 29. † Acts x. 34, 35. ‡ 2 Peter iii. 9.

will! Such is the ridiculous light in which this horrid doctrine places the God of wisdom and goodness.

8. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our "Savior, who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto "the knowledge of the truth."* If then God "will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth," he cannot possibly *will* to the contrary; therefore he could not foreordain that any should not be saved, nor come to the knowledge of the truth.

Thus it appears that the law and the prophets, and also the testimony of Jesus Christ and his apostles, all tend to disprove the doctrine of unconditional election and reprobation, and to confirm, in the most positive manner, the free agency of man. Hence it is clearly evident that the obedience or disobedience of all souls depends on their own free choice, and that their reward will be *according to their works.* As to those passages which are supposed to imply the doctrine of predestination, according to the sense in which it is held, and which its advocates generally advance as evidences in its favor, they are easily explained upon rational principles, without involving that absurd doctrine. Election does not necessarily imply predestination; nor does foreordination, as used in the scriptures, by any means involve the final destination of any soul, without a fair and impartial trial, according to the just and equitable principles of the gospel.

Election, according to the common import of the term, means *choice;* and where it is used in the scriptures, it implies a particular selection of certain persons or people, for certain purposes. This subject may be illustrated by a comparison. It is well known that in an elective government, the officers are elected or chosen to fill certain places or stations, and to perform certain duties. But this election does not necessarily imply that they were predestinated to those offices; nor does it exclude other citizens from the privilege of participating in the affairs of the government, or of enjoying its benefits. There must be public offices in every well regulated government, and suitable characters must be elected and appointed to fill those offices. But all cannot be presidents nor secretaries of state; all cannot be senators nor representatives in congress; yet all may enjoy the blessings and privileges of a good government, provided they conduct themselves worthy of it.

The constitution of the United States has foreordained or predestinated, that the persons elected and qualified, according to such and such provisions, shall hold such and such offices; consequently their election is established and confirmed by certain articles or decrees of the constitution which, perhaps, were enacted, and made a part of the supreme law of the land, before some of the persons so elected were born. Yet the constitution did not fore-

* 1 Tim. ii. 3, 4.

ordain nor elect these persons, it only designated the characters and qualifications necessary for such offices; but left the actual election of the officers to the future determination of the electors, who were to be governed in their proceedings, according to the provisions of the constitution on the subject. But the choice of the worthy candidates, so far from being detrimental to the rest of the citizens, is of essential benefit to them, being chosen for their service. And it must be obvious also, that this choice can be of no use to the persons chosen, unless they accept of it, and fulfil the duties of the office; so it is with the election of all souls in the work of God.

Hence we may see the comparison between things temporal and spiritual. By the constitution of Heaven, which was decreed and established by the Almighty, it was predestinated that such and such characters, possessing such and such essential qualifications, should be leaders, teachers and prophets to the people, to guide and direct them in their duty. Accordingly when the time arrived, in which the occasion required the selection to be made, Noah was chosen to build the ark, and save himself and his family from the flood; because he "was a just man," and one who was obedient to the will of God, and thereby found favor with God. Abraham was chosen and ordained to be the typical father of the faithful; because of his faithfulness and obedience to the call of God. For the same cause, Moses, Joshua, Samuel and the prophets, were chosen as faithful servants of God, to do the work which God had ordained to be done.

But these individuals were not chosen to the exclusion of others from the work of God; but for the benefit of all over whom they were appointed the leaders and guides, that all might be sharers with them, in the blessings promised to the faithful and obedient. Thus the election of Moses as a leader of the Israelites, was designed for their deliverance from their Egyptian bondage, and for their protection and salvation in their journey through the wilderness. But this election did not decide the final state of a single individual of that nation, or of any other; it was intended to serve as a figure to typify Jesus Christ, who was to be the Savior of his people. And as all who were faithful and obedient to the law of Moses, were blessed and protected, and delivered from the power of their enemies, while the disobedient and rebellious were destroyed; so all who will be faithful and obedient to the law of Christ, will be blessed and protected, and delivered from the power of sin and Satan, and find an inheritance in the heavenly Canaan, as God's elect; while the disobedient and rebellious will lose their day and their privilege, and be excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven.

Tho the posterity of Abraham were highly privileged with tem-

poral blessings, according to the promise of God to their faithful father Abraham; tho they were called *God's chosen people* and *his elect;* yet that election could never secure their final salvation, without their own faithfulness and obedience. It is evident that it did not decide the final character and state of the Jews: for they proved a rebellious people, and therefore, notwithstanding their election, they were afterwards cut off by the judgments of God, and scattered over the face of the earth, and exist, even to this day, as a monument of God's displeasure against the sin of disobedience and rebellion.

"Many are called, but few chosen," said Jesus. And this was evidently the case with respect to the Jews: for altho the whole nation was called, and was figuratively a chosen nation; yet comparatively, very few of them proved so faithful as to be found at last among the real chosen of God. "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel." Election is therefore not the seal of salvation. It did not save Judas, altho he was elected, and appointed as one of Christ's twelve apostles; yet he proved himself a traitor, and was therefore disinherited and cut off; and another was chosen to fill his place.

The case of Jacob and Esau is often advanced, as an argument in proof of the doctrine of predestination, which is supposed to be fully confirmed by the following passages of scripture. "Was "not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord; yet I loved Jacob, "and I hated Esau."* And again: "For the children being not "yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose "of God, according to election might stand, not of works, but of "him that calleth."†

But what does this prove? What was "the purpose of God according to election," concerning them? As before observed, election implies choice. The purpose of God therefore, in the choice of these two individuals, was to typify in them, the flesh and the spirit; and to show where the love and blessing of God would finally rest, and where his hatred and displeasure would fall. It is written, "The elder shall serve the younger."‡ But tho we have no account that ever Esau served Jacob, personally; yet this prediction was evidently fulfilled in the two nations which sprung from them, which rendered the figure still more complete. God therefore selected these two children, (even before they were born, and of course before they had done either good or evil, by which they might be judged as to their own merits,) for the very purpose of displaying in them, and in their posterity, a figurative representation of the wide difference between the flesh and the Spirit; between the old creation and the new.

But in this election, there is nothing which could decide their

* Mal. i. 2 & 3. † Rom ix. 11. ‡ Gen. xxv. 23.

future state, as to their salvation or damnation. The final lot and portion of these two nations, and every individual of them, was yet to be proved and decided, in a future day of greater light and spiritual power, and by a more unerring rule of judgment, than could be given in that day. Therefore the election or choice of these two brothers, was never intended to decide their eternal state; but only to represent, in a figure, God's hatred of sin and the fallen nature of the flesh, in the children of wickedness, who will sell their heavenly birthright for a little carnal pleasure; while he manifests his distinguishing love and blessing to those who will wisely distinguish themselves, by their faith and obedience to the calls of the gospel.

The instance of Pharaoh is produced as another argument in favor of the doctrine of predestination. "For the scripture saith "unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee "up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might "be declared throughout all the earth."* But this choice of Pharaoh was also designed, as a figure, to represent the arch oppressor of God's people, in the spirit of wickedness. And the subsequent destruction of him and his host, in the red sea, typified the flood of destruction which will finally overwhelm the enemies of God's people, and put an end to all manner of oppression. But neither the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, nor the destruction of the Egyptian host, can be any evidence of the final state of either. It will doubtless be more tolerable for them, in the day of judgment, than for the rebellious Jews; and beyond comparison more so, than for those who reject the light of the gospel in the present day. Obedience or disobedience to the everlasting gospel, the light of which must finally be extended to all, whether living or dead, will at length prove the salvation or damnation of every soul.

The scriptures have been greatly wrested to prove doctrines which have originated in antichristian darkness; but after all, there is nothing to be found throughout the sacred volume, that affords the smallest proof of that gloomy and soul-darkening doctrine of eternal and unconditional decrees, which so unjustly fixes the final salvation or damnation of souls, without a special regard to their works. The election of individuals as ministers, prophets, or leaders of the people, by no means implies a certainty of the final salvation of the persons so elected,† any more than it implies the damnation of those who are not elected to these offices; because all must finally be judged and rewarded according to their works. Those works, however, which were performed in a state of darkness and ignorance, tho they must have their due reward, can never decide the final doom of any soul. Those performed under the light of the gospel, and with a full understanding of its require-

* Rom ix. 17. † Witness Balaam, Saul, Judas and others.

ments, are the works by which the soul must be tried, and for which he must receive his final reward.

The truth of these things is so abundantly testified in the scriptures, and appears so consistent with the righteousness and justice of God, that there seems to be no possible ground to dispute it; and yet we find many antichristian preachers and writers continually exclaiming against the efficacy of *good works*, and thus discouraging all attempts to obtain the mercy and favor of God by the virtuous acts of faithful obedience. But this discouraging doctrine will finally prove a poor excuse for their own idleness and disobedience. "Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every "man according as his works shall be."*

CHAPTER III.

The Creation and Order of the Natural World a figure of that which is Spiritual.

THE natural world, and the things therein contained, were, from the beginning, wisely designed as figurative representations of spiritual things to come. As this earth was created for a temporary use, and was never intended to be the abiding place of man, but only a place of preparation for a more substantial, durable and glorious state, in the spiritual world; it was therefore highly proper and necessary that, in its creation and order, it should bear a suitable comparison with that spiritual creation of which it was a figure. But as the difference between things natural and spiritual is very great; so this comparison is but as a shadow compared with the substance.

Jesus Christ, both in his public ministry, and in his discourses with his disciples, often made use of natural similitudes to represent spiritual things. By this he evidently manifested that the natural creation, and the things pertaining to it, were well adapted to represent spiritual and eternal things, which indeed could not be represented otherwise than by the things of time. This truth is more fully revealed, in these last days, to those who are now made partakers of the real substance of those things, which were formerly represented by types and shadows. "That was not first which is "spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is "spiritual."†

In the first of Genesis, we have the following account of the commencement and progress of the natural creation and its established order, together with the first creation of man.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And "the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon

* Rev. xxii. 12. † 1 Cor. xv. 46.

"the face of the deep: and the Spirit of God moved upon the face "of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there "was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God "divided the light from the darkness." Or rather, according to the original, "God divided," or made a separation *between the light and the darkness.** The sacred historian then proceeds to show the formation and order of the natural heavens and earth, the sea and the dry land, and the natural productions and established order of each. "And God said, Let the earth bring forth "grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit "after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth; and it "was so."

Thus the fixed and unalterable laws of nature were established in the fruits; each kind must bring forth fruit according to its nature. It was therefore contrary to the nature of the oak to bring forth oranges, or for the fig-tree to yield peaches. The seed of the melon could not produce cucumbers, nor the flaxseed bring forth barley. The laws of nature could not be violated, in this respect, in any part of the vegetable creation.

"And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven, "to divide the day from the night: and let them be for signs, and "for seasons, and for days and years: and let them be for lights "in the firmament of heaven, to give light upon the earth: and it "was so." Here we see that when these sources of natural light were created, and established "in the firmament of heaven to give "light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, "and to divide the light from the darkness," God at the same time, ordained that they should be "*for signs and for seasons*," as well as "for days and years." Thus it appears that Divine Wisdom has ordained that the things of the natural creation, under the government and influence of these lights, should be regulated by *times and seasons;* and these are for signs to those who walk in the light. But this subject will be more particularly noticed in the sequel. The account thus proceeds.

"And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the "moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the "earth in the open firmament of heaven. And God created great "whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters "brought forth abundantly after their kind, and every fowl after "his kind. And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful and multi"ply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the "earth. And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living crea"ture after his kind, cattle and creeping thing, and beast of the "earth after his kind: and it was so." Thus all these things were created and established in their order, and endowed, by the laws of creation, with the power of generating their own species, in their

* See marginal Bible.

order, and according to the times and seasons appointed by th Creator.

"And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our like "ness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, an "over the fowl of the air, and over the earth, and over every creep "ing thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created ma "in his own image, in the image of God created he him; mal "and female created he them. And God blessed them, and Go "said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth "and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, an "over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that movet "upon the earth. And God saw every thing that he had made "and behold it was very good."

Thus man was appointed the sole lord of the creation; his pow er and dominion was over all. But as he was constituted God' representative on earth, who best knew his situation, and the dan ger to which he was exposed, it was necessary that he should yiel perfect obedience to the commands of his Creator, as the onl possible means by which he could retain that power and dominio which the Creator had given him.

From the foregoing statement the following observations may be drawn.

1. It appears that the natural creation was gradually formed an brought into order: that this order, which extended through th whole creation, was supported and governed by certain laws an regulations, which constituted the beauty and harmony of the cre ation, and which could not be broken without creating confusion and that every thing in its proper order and place was pronounce good, and placed under the dominion of man.

2. In the creation a separation was made between light and dark ness, day and night, and many other things of different and oppo site qualities which, when contrasted, clearly represented good an evil, and were calculated to present to the mind of man the quali ties of things beautiful and ugly, lovely and hateful, harmless an hurtful, and were doubtless necessary to impress upon his under standing a sense of good and evil, happiness and misery.

3. These things, so different and opposite in their nature, wer entirely separate and distinct from each other; and as each in it place was designed, as a sign or figure, to represent that which wa good or evil among spiritual things, it was therefore necessary fo man, in all his transactions, to keep that distinction in view, and t govern himself accordingly.

To the spiritually minded the comparison between natural an spiritual things is plain and obvious. The light of the sun, bein the source or fountain of light in the natural creation, is a mos striking figure of the Fountain of spiritual light, the bright Sourc of everlasting life, the glorious Light of Heaven, of which all soul

who shall be found faithful to improve the light which God has given them, will be made partakers. The darkness of the night evidently prefigures the shades of spiritual darkness, and the gloomy mansions of hell, where all souls who chuse darkness rather than light, must sink at last. The beautiful and harmonious songsters of the grove are so many emblems of happy spirits, whose blessed influences communicate happiness to all around them. The voracious raven, the midnight screech-owl, and the like, are emblematical of those destructive and tormenting spirits which haunt the infernal regions, and torment the wicked.

Similar comparisons may be made relative to good and evil beasts, beautiful and ugly animals, and useful and destructive creatures of every kind. The fruits of the earth, the plants and herbs of the field, and every thing that grows upon the earth, as well as all living creatures which inhabit the watery world, or fly in the airy regions, are either useful or destructive, pure or impure, and are figurative either of spiritual good or evil, purity or impurity: for God has created nothing in vain. Therefore, tho all these things are temporal, as to their existence, and must soon perish, like all other works of time; yet in their creation, infinite Wisdom evidently had real and essential objects in view, as spiritual substances, to be typified or pointed out by these created objects.

It may be asserted as an objection to the foregoing doctrine, that these things were created for the use and subsistence of man. Admitting this to be true, it does not prove that they were not, at the same time, intended as figurative representations of spiritual things. But there are evidently many kinds of living creatures, as well as many other things in the natural creation, for which mankind have never yet found any use, and perhaps never will in this world; and certainly they were not created in vain. What then could have been the object of their creation, if it was not to represent something of a spiritual nature to be revealed hereafter?

The fact that sheep and lambs, as well as a variety of other creatures, were given to be slain, both for food and for sacrifice, did not prevent their being used as figures to typify the sacrifice to be made for sin, and to represent the meek and innocent character of the Savior, who was "brought as a lamb to the slaughter."* Nor were they, on that account, less typical of the meek and innocent character of his people, whom he calls his sheep and his lambs.† So also the best fruits of the earth, which were evidently created for the immediate use of man, and expressly given for his subsistence, are no less figurative on that account; but even the very circumstance of their being given for food, was intended to

* How aptly does the circumstance that man is dependent upon the sheep and lambs of the flock for the clothing of his natural body, show our dependence upon the Lamb of God for "the garments of salvation," of which our natural garments are a figure!

† See John xxi. 15, & 16. also chap. x. 11 to 16.

show that they are figurative of that spiritual fruit with which th righteous will be fed in the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus Chris had reference to this, when he said to his disciples, "I will no "drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until that day when "drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom."*

It is well known that those who are born into this world, mus be nourished with temporal food, or they would soon perish. An it is as certain that the new born soul, who has been begotten i the regeneration, and brought forth in the new creation, by th renovating power of Christ, as really requires spiritual food, a the natural man requires that which is natural. Even the pur waters of the fountain, so refreshing to a thirsty man, are figurativ of those spiritual waters which flow from the fountain of everlastin life, and without which souls in the spiritual world must suffe and be constrained to cry out, like the rich man in the parable for a drop of *the water of life* to cool their tongues.

These figures extend to every thing which pertains to the natu ral creation: nor do they stop here. All the useful and importan works of man, which are produced by the exercise of his natura faculties, are also figurative of the good works to be wrought b his spiritual faculties hereafter. And he who is faithful in perform ing his duty here, whether in things which are in themselves grea or small, will be honored with a glorious employment in the hea venly world, compared with which his greatest works in this worl are but a shadow. "If therefore, ye have not been faithful in th "unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true rich "es?"† And as the difference between the faithful and the unfaith ful, in this world, is manifested by their works; so in the world o spirits, the difference will appear as much greater, as heavenly an divine things are greater than those which are earthly. The faithfu will be honored and the unfaithful degraded; the former will hav his talents doubled to him, and the latter will have his taken fro him. The parable of Jesus Christ concerning the talents, is striking illustration of this subject.‡

CHAPTER IV.

The established order of times and seasons in the natural cre tion, together with the primeval state and probation of man.

When God created the world, he established in it certain law by which it was to be governed. Among these were included th order of times and seasons. These laws being established by th Almighty, could not be altered by any inferior power. The e tablished order of the sun, moon and stars, which rise in the ea

* Matt. xxvi 29. † Luke xvi. 11. ‡ See Matt. xxv. 15.

and set in the west, could not be broken, nor their courses changed, so as to rise and set in an opposite direction, and at different periods of time. Nor could the established order of the seasons be changed, so as to produce effects contrary to the designs of infinite Wisdom. Day and night, heat and cold, summer and winter, seed time and harvest must have their appointed courses; nor was it in the power of any human being to change them. It would have been utterly inconsistent with Divine Wisdom to subject, to the control of man, the established laws of nature by which the creation was governed; therefore these laws were necessarily independent of all human power.

When God brought forth the vegetable creation he established in it the laws of vegetation, which required that every thing pertaining thereto should bring forth fruit, each according to its kind, and be regulated by times and seasons. Hence every different kind had its allotted period to grow to maturity, to bud and blossom, and to bring forth fruit. Thus established and regulated, the order and harmony of the vegetable creation was rendered beautiful and glorious; no violation of nature, nothing disorderly to corrupt and mar its beauty nor destroy its harmony. Similar laws were also established in the animal creation. They too, in their various orders, had their appointed times to grow to maturity, and their seasons to generate and bring forth their offspring according to their kind.

Man also had laws given him according to his lot and order in the creation. As he was made superior to all the rest of God's creatures in the natural world, being endowed with superior faculties and a rational soul, it was necessary that he should be governed by superior laws. The vegetable creation was regulated by the periodical seasons of the year, and these were sufficient for it. The animal creation, in addition to the rotation of the seasons, was endowed with the law of natural instinct, which was necessary to guide and regulate the various kinds of animals in procuring sustenance, and in the propagation of their species, according to their different classes and orders, in their times and seasons.

But man, being superior to all other creatures, had not only the rotation of the seasons, and the law of nature, in common with the animal creation; but he had also a superior law, by which he was made capable of overruling and governing all the dispositions and propensities of his animal nature. The rational powers of his soul were superior to his animal faculties, and constituted him a rational being, and brought him into a near relation to his Creator; he was therefore capable of receiving the law of his Creator to govern and direct his rational soul, in all its movements. Hence he was enabled, not only to keep the law of nature, and

govern his own inferior propensities, but also to have the government and dominion over all the inferior creation.

The work designed for man, in his primeval state, was not only to increase and multiply, and replenish the earth with his own offspring, but also to *subdue it*,* and improve the condition of it, and with it his own condition. But he was to be regulated in all these things, not by the propensities of his animal passions, but according to the order which God had appointed for him, and which was to be made manifest in his living soul, by the *Spirit of God*.† By so doing, he would have been enabled, under the special guidance and protection of his Creator, to rise by degrees to a higher state of perfection, and might have been, even in this world, the honorable progenitor of a numerous offspring who, by their obedience, might have blessed and beautified the earth, honored themselves and their primeval parents, and glorified their Creator. This was the primeval state and standing of man.

But as the man was to be the ruler and governor of all the inferior creation, it was necessary that his faithfulness should be proved. Being created a free agent, and endowed with power to act according to his own will and pleasure, as far as his capacity extended, independent of any other being, it was therefore necessary that he should have a law to direct him aright—an order which he must keep, for his own safety and protection. For altho he had power to act freely; yet his situation and inexperience were such as to need protection. There was a work before him; and it was a matter of importance that he should be fully endowed with power and wisdom to perform it. This he was to gain by obedience to the counsel and instructions of his Creator. As a young and inexperienced child is required to walk in obedience to the counsel and instruction of his wise and experienced parent, as the only safe means of gaining wisdom and experience for himself; so he must prove his faithfulness by his obedience, before he can be justly entitled to the heirship of any portion of his father's inheritance.

Hence we may see the importance of man's obedience to his Creator, and the necessity of proving his own faithfulness, by his obedience, before he could fairly be entitled to the full government and dominion over the new formed world. It was for this purpose that God gave him a positive command. By strictly keeping this command, he was fully able to preserve his honor and dignity, and retain his lot and place as the first in the government and dominion of all this lower creation. This command was not entrusted to his animal sensations; but being from God, it was committed to the more exalted faculties of his rational soul, and was, emphat-

* The modern advocates for the *great command*, so called, seem to forget this part of it.

† This was the *tree of life* in the natural world, of the fruit of which he might freely eat and live to God, in his natural state.

ically, *the law of God to man,* for the trial and proof of his faithfulness and obedience.

It may be asked, What was this command? We read that he was forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, or to touch it. This injunction was a prohibitory and positive command to the man, whatever might have been the figure by which it was manifested to him. To abstain therefore from this fruit, was only to govern his animal propensities, and keep them in subjection to the law of God in his rational soul. This was an easy task while he kept the power of self-denial in his own soul; but when he had once yielded to the tempter, and had given up his self-denying power, he could not recall it, it was gone forever from him. Thenceforth, without the protecting care and overruling power of his Creator, he was liable to be completely ruined and destroyed by the power of the enemy, to whose temptations he had fallen a victim. What a lesson of warning to mankind in the present day, and especially to young people, to beware of all insinuating allurements to sensual pleasure, and to shun every temptation to evil!

But what was this tree of the knowledge of good and evil? and whence arose the temptation to eat of it? Some suppose the forbidden object to be the fruit of some natural fruit-tree. But we would ask, How is it possible that a tree or its fruit should contain the knowledge of good and evil, or be able to communicate that knowledge to man? Yet it was evidently something by which the man's obedience was to be tried. But if the mere proof of obedience had been the only object, tho a very necessary one, we might naturally suppose that any other command or prohibition might have answered the same purpose. Proof of obedience was undoubtedly a most essential point. But no candid person will deny that the wisdom of God would select the most important object for the trial of man's obedience; an object not only important in itself, but one which really required that injunction for the man's own benefit, and the benefit of his posterity.

And what could be more suitable, and better calculated to try the man and prove his obedience, than to lay upon him an order calculated to govern his animal propensities, and suppress any disorderly influence upon his mind? Hence the forbidden object might, with the greatest propriety, be compared to a fruit-tree of delicious fruit, as a suitable figure to represent to mankind, in after ages, the influence of the temptation upon the animal propensities of the youthful and inexperienced couple. Their propensity to satisfy hunger and slake their thirst, was necessary to support life, and therefore could not consistently be denied; nor could such a denial be attended with any possible benefit, in their situation.

But as the power of generation was given to man solely for the purpose of procreation, and not for the gratification of his animal nature, the dignity of his creation required that he should maintain a greater degree of order and purity, in the work of generation, than was required of the inferior part of the creation, which was governed by the law of nature. This was the more essential, as the offspring of man were to possess rational and immortal souls, destined to an eternal existence. It was therefore a matter of the first importance, that the primeval parents of mankind should strictly obey the injunctions of their Creator, that their offspring should not be corrupted by any violation of the order of nature, on the part of their parents, in respect to the times and seasons of generation; but that they should be generated under the sanction of Divine Authority, according to the times and seasons of God's appointment, as well as in strict conformity to the law of nature. This therefore, was the command of God to man, and was given, not only to prove his obedience, but for his protection against that subtle enemy whose object was to destroy the creation, by infusing his poisonous influence at a point which was calculated to corrupt the whole human race, and produce the most extensive mischief.

But why was it called, "The tree of the knowledge of good and evil?" Because these were the most appropriate terms by which the figure could be expressed: for in obedience, the greatest good was to be made known and ensue; and in disobedience, the greatest evil was actually made known, and did ensue, both to himself and all his posterity: hence no other terms could be so suitable to express the real nature and design of this figure.

The times and seasons of generation were evidently designed by the Creator, as the established order of propagation, in the animal creation. This order is very visible in the inferior creation, and doubtless would have been no less manifest in man, had he been faithful to his trust. His rational soul, while standing in its primitive purity and uprightness, could never be degraded to the servitude of his animal passions; it must have stood preeminent in dignity, and held the government of every inferior propensity. The power was entrusted to the living and rational soul of man; and the command of God was sufficient to maintain that power, as long as the soul maintained its obedience. This was the point of trial; on this depended the man's fate; on this depended the state and character of his offspring: for like begets like; and if parents are alienated from God, they will of course produce an alienated offspring.

The man therefore, in his primeval state, stood in a noble capacity, not only to prove his faithfulness by his obedience, but to preserve inviolate the order of the creation, for the support and maintenance of his important and dignified station, both for his

own happiness and the happiness of his posterity, and for the honor and glory of his Creator. His task was easy; it required no sacrifice, but merely the subjection of his animal propensities to his rational powers. But still he was in a state of trial, a state of probation; and his obedience was the very point to be tried. So long as he kept this, all was safe; but if he failed in this, all was lost. This state of trial was necessary; for without it there could be no proof, either of obedience or disobedience. The soul in yielding obedience to God his superior, was safely protected; but in yielding to an inferior propensity, he must of necessity fall under the power of that influence to which he yielded obedience. "Know "ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his "servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or "of obedience unto righteousness."*

But whence originated the evil influence which led to disobedience? It could not be in any of the works of God; for they were all pronounced "very good," and it is impossible that *very evil* should proceed from *very good*. It could not spring from God; for no evil influence could originate from the source of all goodness. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." Hence darkness could never proceed from light. The evil therefore, must have originated in darkness; it could have had no other source.

By recurring back to the order of the creation, in the preceding chapter, it will be seen that tho God's works were "all very good," tho light was created in the midst of darkness, and order established in the midst of confusion; yet the darkness was not annihilated, nor was the source of confusion destroyed. In scripture, the power of evil is called *the power of darkness*.† Hence that invisible power of evil, which is eternally opposed to all good, and which is called *The Devil*, has its existence in that spiritual darkness of which the natural darkness is a figure. From this power flows all spiritual and moral evil; it is the source of all those principles and influences which, in their operations, oppose the nature of godliness and injure the works of God. It is therefore the height of folly and wickedness, in any one, to charge any of those evil propensities which lead to the dark works of sin, upon the God of light and holiness: for they never originated from him.

The darkness which was left in the natural creation, and which was divided from the light, was designed to show that good hath no fellowship with evil, nor the spirit of light with the spirit of darkness. It also shows that there was still a place left for the entrance and temptation of an evil influence. That evil influence indeed entered, in the hour of darkness, and found access to the woman, in the form of a serpent, a sly, cunning serpent, a crooked serpent, an inferior, grovelling reptile, one of those figures of evil

* Rom. vi. 16. † See Luke xxii. 53 Eph. vi. 12. & Col. i. 13.

which was intended as a warning to man, and which ought to have put the woman on her guard. Instead of listening to the deceitful insinuations of a reptile so much her inferior, she ought to have been guided by the wholesome counsel of her superior, and kept the law of her Creator, which it is evident she well recollected, even in the midst of her fatal interview with the serpent.

But the woman was overcome. She yielded to that evil influence which, through the subtilty of the serpent, wrought upon her animal propensities, and infused into her mind the filthy passion of *lust*. The woman being thus enticed and overcome, enticed her husband, and through the same evil influence, overcame him. Thus the noble order of the creation was reversed. Man having yielded to the temptation, and received and indulged an evil propensity, his power was gone. And having been once overcome, by yielding to the insinuations of an authority inferior to his own, he had henceforth no control over the inferior creation, any further than by the permission of his Creator: for he had forfeited his right by his disobedience. Thus man became a servant to the power of evil by yielding obedience to it, by which means his nature, and, through that medium, the whole natural world became corrupted with evil.

Hence it is easy to see that this earth was, in every respect, calculated for a state of probation. Had there been no darkness upon it, had there been nothing in it to which evil could find access, then truly it would have been no place of trial; and if no place of trial, then no state of probation to man. As darkness is the habitation of evil; so the spirit of evil can always find access wherever he finds darkness. But darkness had its appointed place and order; and had man been faithful in his duty, evil might have been confined within its own limits. It was evidently man's duty from the beginning, to retire to his place of protection, and rest in the time of darkness, and wait the returning light; and not to expose himself in the dark till he had obtained light sufficient to withstand the power of darkness.*

Man, by his disobedience, exposed himself to the power of darkness, and opened the way for the entrance of the enemy where, otherwise, he never could have entered. This occasioned his fall, the loss of his power and authority, and completed his ruin, as far as respected his relation and connection with the spiritual world. From this loss and ruin, it was impossible that there should be any restoration without a new order of things, and a new man who would prove faithful to his trust. What a lesson of warning to the children of God to be faithful! unfaithfulness leads to inevitable ruin.

* A wise man will not attempt even to pursue his honest calling in the dark; if he has no lamp to light him, he will retire to rest till the morning light; but thieves and robbers, whoremongers and adulterers, "chuse darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil." This may serve as a figure of the wickedness committed in spiritual darkness, and the danger of being exposed to it.

This world being created and designed for a state of probation, it must necessarily continue to be such to Adam's posterity, as well as to himself. To suppose that Adam's faithfulness would have released his posterity from a state of trial, is a mistaken supposition; because a season of probation was no less necessary for them than for him: for evil still existed; and it was therefore as necessary for his posterity to gain power over it, as for himself. His faithfulness could not have released them from the trial of their own obedience, nor have secured them from the wiles of the Adversary. Each individual must therefore necessarily pass through a state of trial; and had Adam stood faithful, his posterity, even to the latest generation, while the order of nature remained, must have stood by their own obedience, or fallen by their own disobedience, to the authority of their righteous parents, who, by standing in the order of God, and keeping the Divine law, would have been God's representatives to their offspring.

Adam and Eve having, through disobedience, yielded to the influence of evil, were overcome by it; and the spirit of evil having once found an entrance, could enter again and again. They must therefore, ever after, be under the power of that evil influence, unless protected by some superior power. And as like causes produce like effects; so they begat children in their own likeness, an offspring like themselves, and under the power of the same evil influence in the work of generation. Their union and relation to their Creator was now lost. They were now forever debarred from the tree of life, which was before accessible to them, and by which they partook of the life of God, and shared communion with him, in their natural state. Having now nothing to support them in their former exalted station, they of course, fell from their relation to God, into that nature which they had indulged and gratified; the nature of lust. The rational soul having yielded its power, their animal propensities, being corrupted by the nature of the serpent, had now the preeminence over them.

Here we may clearly see the cause why it is, even to this day, that the rational soul of man is so much under the influence of his animal passions. And yet, even of this, the greater part of mankind seem to be utterly insensible, and will often imagine that they are guided in their speculations and pursuits, by the dictates of truth and right reason, while in fact, they are either led by their animal passions, or deceived by some of the propensities of a fallen nature. This is often seen, not only in the ordinary transactions of life, but also in the pursuits of religion, in the establishment of many religious institutions, in the speculations and writings of men on subjects of divinity, and may be observed in a thousand instances, even among those who are esteemed great and good men: *But the tree is known by its fruit.*

PART IV.

THE FALL, LOSS AND DEPRAVITY OF MAN, INCLUDING GOD'S PROGRESSIVE WORK, AND HIS DEALINGS WITH MAN IN HIS FALLEN STATE.

CHAPTER I.

The cause, nature and effects of Man's loss from God.

IT is universally acknowledged by the professors of christianity, that in consequence of Adam's transgression, mankind are lost from God. This is so fully taught in the scriptures, and the evidence of it so visible throughout the world, that it cannot be disputed. But what was the real cause of that loss, and wherein its nature and effects are most clearly manifested, is but little considered, and still less understood. It is generally viewed, however, as a punishment inflicted on mankind, for an act of disobedience committed by their first parents. In this view, God is represented as an arbitrary despot, with his eternal and absolute decrees, imputing guilt to the whole human race, as the effect of Adam's transgression. But this doctrine, to say the least of it, is a blind impeachment of God's righteousness.

The idea that mankind are born into the world with Adam's guilt upon them, is wholly inconsistent with Divine Righteousness, and contrary to all the light of reason and revelation that ever God bestowed on man, and has no foundation in truth. Even the common sense of mankind must teach them, that it is impossible for a son to be guilty of an act of sin which was committed by his father, before he was born; and it would be considered as the height of injustice to punish the son for his father's sin. "The son shall "not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear "the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall "be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon "him."* Yet this son might afterwards become guilty of the same sin by his own act; and in that case he would justly deserve punishment.

To say that the child of fallen parents is born in a fallen state, or under the influence of a fallen nature, is to declare the truth; but this by no means implies guilt in the child. No one will pretend that a child who is the offspring of adultery, is, on that account, chargeable with the guilt of his parents; nor would it be consistent with justice for him to suffer for the crime of his parents. But as a corrupt fountain cannot send forth pure waters, and as like causes necessarily produce like effects; so the fruit of every tree partakes of the nature of the tree which produced it. And tho the wicked act of the parents cannot be charged upon the child;

* Ezek. xviii. 20.

yet the child is liable, unless restrained by a superior principle, to follow the same wicked example, and bring guilt upon himself by a similar act.

This is just the situation of Adam's posterity. Those who yield to the same propensity, and follow his example, naturally run into the same act of sin, and as really partake of the forbidden fruit as Adam did; and by that means they bring the same guilt upon themselves, and are thenceforth as effectually excluded from the tree of life as Adam and Eve were. But those who are willing to yield obedience to a superior principle, and to deny themselves and take up their crosses against the propensities of that nature which they have received from their parents, are justly entitled to eat of the tree of life and live forever.

Disobedience to the positive command of God, was evidently the *cause* of man's fall; and his fall was the inevitable *consequence* of the act which he committed, of which he was forewarned at the time he was forbidden to commit it. As if a father who had a son residing in the neighborhood of an enemy, should warn his son of the danger of listening to the insinuations of that enemy, and command him not to do it at his peril. The son disobeys, and the consequences of which he was forewarned, follow of course. Here the blame and loss falls upon the son, while the father stands justified, having done his duty in warning his son of the danger. It is impossible that there should be injustice with God. A holy and righteous Being cannot tempt any of his creatures to their own destruction: it is inconsistent with his nature. "Let no man say "when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be "tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but every man "is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."*

The very command of God to the man was an evidence of his danger, and showed that there was an opposite influence, against which it was necessary to be guarded. The temptation to disobedience proceeded from the prince of darkness, the great enemy of souls, who found an entrance into God's creation through the serpent, the very emblem of subtilty and deception. Through the insinuations of his deceitful spirit, he infused into the animal sensations of the woman the lust of concupiscence, which she communicated to the man, and by which they were both overshadowed with darkness, and unseasonably led into the act of sexual coition; and thus they partook of the forbidden fruit.† Hence the curse which followed was denounced, and actually laid upon that nature

* James i 13, 14

† The soul having been endowed by the Creator, with sufficient power to protect the body, the animal propensities could never be overcome and made subservient to evil, until the soul had yielded to the influence of the evil spirit upon the animal propensities, and given up its own power to the dominion of the tempter. Having once done this, the soul could never regain its power until it had found its union to a superior Spirit, which was able to overcome the tempter and bruise the serpent's head.

which they had thus received from the serpent, and mutually indulged in themselves. And the same nature and the same curse, have both been continued down, in the line of natural generation, to this day. And this curse can never be taken off without a full and final cross against the indulgence of that same fleshly lust, and the final destruction of that nature which leads to it.

Many objections have been urged against this doctrine, as well as against the doctrine of celibacy and continence in general, which are well known to be among the principle articles of our faith. To enter fully into the discussion of this subject, and answer in a satisfactory manner, all the objections that may be raised against this doctrine, will require great plainness of speech.* But as this appears to be the most darling principle of the world, and as the greatest opposition against our faith is levelled at this particular principle; therefore, in conformity to the strict demands of light and truth, revealed in this day, it appears necessary that the covering which has so long been spread over all nations, should be taken away, and the vail removed from the face of all people.†

This vail was prefigured by the vail of the temple, which separated the entrance into the most holy place. "The vail of the temple was rent in twain" at the crucifixion of Jesus,‡ which signified the rending of the vail of the flesh by his sufferings for sin. After that, those who faithfully followed his footsteps through mortification, and lived a spiritual life, were able to look within the vail, and to discover, in some measure, what it was which separated those who lived in the works of generation from having access to the most holy place. Yet the vail remained untaken away. "Neverthless," says the apostle, "when it shall turn to the Lord, "the vail shall be taken away,"|| And this never could be done till the second appearing of Christ, when it was taken away by that chosen female in whom the second appearing of Christ first commenced. As the vail of darkness which hid the face of God from man, was first caused by the transgression of the first woman; so it could not be removed until it was removed by that distinguished woman, in whom was revealed the Bride of the Lamb, the first Mother of the children of the Kingdom, in the new creation.

That Adam and Eve were unseasonably led into the act of sexual coition by the lust of concupiscence, through the insinuations of the serpent, and (whatever may have been done in a figure) that this lust was, in reality, the forbidden fruit of which they partook, appears evident from the following considerations.

1. *The sentence denounced upon the woman.* "I will greatly "multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow shalt thou

* We would not willingly give offence to any; our only design is to show and vindicate our faith clearly on this subject, for the information of all who desire to understand it, and are willing to be benefitted by it.

† See Isa. xxv. 7. ‡ See Matt. xxvii. 51. || 2 Cor. iii. 16.

"bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband;" or, (more properly, according to the original,) "thy desire shall be "subject to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee."*

Here it may be asked, Why was the sentence directed against her conception? Why was she to be punished with sorrow in bringing forth children? And why was her desire (or more properly, her lust†) to be subject to the will of her hushand? Why this rigorous sentence? Is not God just and righteous? Most certainly; and therefore he dispenses punishments according to the nature of the offence; or rather, he forsakes those who forsake him, and leaves them to reap the reward of their own doings. Whatever a man sows, the same he must reap; and whatever he eats, that he must digest, however painful it may feel. He who, after being faithfully warned by his friend, foolishly swallows a poisonous fruit, because of its fair appearance and peculiar flavor, must feel its effects; but he ought by no means to charge his sufferings upon his friend.

From the very nature of the curse denounced upon the woman, the discerning mind will readily perceive what the nature of the offence was. This same curse has been more or less felt by the fallen daughters of Eve to this day."‡ This remark will apply, with peculiar force, to all those who have been decoyed by the same insinuating allurements to pleasure, who have yielded to the same desires of an animal nature, who have been ensnared by the same deceitful influences of concupiscence, and have conceived and brought forth children in obedience to the inordinate demands of lust. Thus the woman is not only subjected to the pains and sorrows of childbirth, but even in her conception, she becomes subject to the libidinous passions of her husband; and in this sense, her desire is subject to the will of her husband.§ This slavish subjection is often carried to such a shocking extent, that

* See mar Bib Gen iii. 16. † See Cruden's Concordence, Article *Desire*.

‡ Tho it is obvious that the effects of the primitive curse are seen and felt by the whole human race, as the offspring of fallen parents and heirs of that curse; and tho all womankind have inherited their portion of the curse denounced upon the first woman; yet there has always been an exception in favor of those virgin daughters who have wisely kept themselves from the contaminating corruptions of lust. They have been, thereby, not only exempted from the pains and sorrows of childbirth, and preserved from those debasing pollutions, and that servile wretchedness, so common to those who subject themselves to the inordinate passions of man; but they have often been distinguished as peculiar objects of Divine favor.

§ This may indeed be a willing subjection on the part of the woman, and her passions may be even more debased than his, but whether her subjection be willing or unwilling, still this does not alter its servile nature, as respects the man's power of enforcing it, so long as he possesses that power, as her husband, and exercises it at the instigation of his passions, instead of being governed by the law of nature, or the law of God.

many females have suffered an unnatural and premature death, in consequence of the unseasonable and excessive indulgence of this passion in the man. Thousands there are, no doubt, who are able to bear a sorrowful testimony to the truth of this remark.

The libidinous debauchee may sneer at this unseemly picture, and the squeamish prude may frown at it; but the candid and reflecting mind will readily acknowledge and deplore its painful and melancholy truth. Some, convinced of its truth by sorrowful experience, will doubtless be ready to exclaim, This is surely a heavy curse upon the woman; but is the man spared? By no means: but his curse appears more obvious in another point of view. Tho the ground was cursed for his sake, at the time of his first transgression; yet it is evident that he has greatly increased the curse of the land, by his own corruptions, and degraded himself far below the state in which the primitive curse left him; as will appear in the sequel.

2. *The evident violation of the order of nature, in a total disregard to times and seasons, in the work of generation.*

That source from which man derives his earthly existence, from which his very being springs, ought to have been preserved pure and uncorrupted. The order of his generation was never designed to be polluted by disorderly passions, nor perverted by untimely seasons. Yet what is the fact in this respect, when contrasted with the inferior part of the creation? As before stated, the various orders of the animal and vegetable creation are governed by the established laws of nature, and generate and bring forth fruit according to the regular order of times and seasons.* But man is a most marvellous exception in this respect. He who alone was created and appointed the lord of all this lower world, altho in many other respects, he displays a mind capable of a far superior degree of perfection; and altho, in the ordinary transactions of life, he often observes a good degree of order; yet in the generation of his species he regards none.

Notwithstanding his dignified station as lord of the earth; notwithstanding his rational soul, with all its noble faculties; notwithstanding his light and knowledge, his instruction, experience and observation; notwithstanding the law of his Creator, which was given to regulate in him the times and seasons of generation (as well as all other things pertaining to his work) to a greater degree of perfection than could be expected in the brutal creation; yet in this important point, man has shamefully degraded himself below all the inferior creation. Regardless of the regular order of nature, he consults it not; blind to the times and seasons of conception, he sees them not; deaf to the law of Moses, he listens not to it; an enemy to the pure and perfect law of Christ, he banishes it

* See "Established order of times and seasons," page 120.

from his thoughts. He is eagerly bent upon the acts of generation, but seeks none of its fruits; the desire of offspring is not his motive; his rule of action is dictated only by his inordinate passions. The insatiable nature of his lust knows no bounds, submits to no order, and cares for no times nor seasons; except it be the time and season of darkness, which is so congenial to his lawless and shameful works.

Such is the lost state of man, and such the subverted order of nature in the works of generation. To the truth of these remarks let the world itself bear witness. And herein we have a striking proof of that carnal mind in man, which the apostle says, "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be."

3. The shame which is generally found to be inseparable from the act of sexual coition.

This is not only a powerful evidence that the act itself is under a curse, but an undeniable proof of its impurity and unholiness. If this be not so, why did the shame which was the consequence of Adam's and Eve's transgression, fall upon the parts which they covered? Does not this plainly point out the very act which they had committed? Does it not evidently show what the forbidden fruit was? If by the *forbidden fruit*, we are to understand literally, the fruit of some natural tree, which Eve plucked with her hands, and which they both ate with their mouths, why did not the shame fall upon the hand that plucked, and the mouth that ate it? As before observed, God always dispenses his judgments according to the nature of the offence. But in this case, there does not appear to be any punishment inflicted upon the hand or the mouth; but the parts to which pertain the power of generation, are now, for the first time, condemned to feel shame; and their first object was to conceal those parts from the view of each other; accordingly "they sewed figleaves together and made themselves aprons." And even to this day, it is justly accounted a shame, both in the male and female, to expose the nakedness of those parts; and more especially in the female, who it seems is doomed to share the greatest portion of the curse in this respect, as being the first in the transgression.

This guilty passion of shame seems to be peculiarly connected with that libidinous act which first produced it; so that it naturally shuns the light, and seeks to cover itself in the shades of darkness, secluded even from the eyes of the most intimate friends. Is not this fact, of itself, a most striking evidence that there is something, either in the act itself, or which is inseparably connected with it, which never came from God? And yet are there not many, very many, among modern christians, who, setting aside that which Jesus Christ declared to be "the first and great command," have set up this lascivious act in its place? and do they not, instead of loving the Lord God with all their hearts and souls, verily love their lusts

with all their hearts and souls, and devote all the mind and strength to support and maintain it?

Corrupted and abused, and shamefully debased, as the work of generation is, by the lust of concupiscence, it is still supported and maintained by the professors of christianity, who profess to sanction it by a legal ceremony, under the name of a *divine institution.* But where is the evidence that the nature of the act is purified, or the shame taken away, by the means? For altho the *most reverend* and *pious divines* may exert all their piety, and all their divinity, to gospelize it in their sermons, legalize it in their marriage ceremonies, and sanctify it by their fervent prayers; yet they can neither take away the shame of the act, nor purify the nature of it; nor can they ever induce the *pious devotees* of this *holy ordinance* to show forth their obedient zeal, by fulfilling this *great command* before the eyes of their *Reverend* teachers, who have done so much to sanctify the deed to them.

Nor can even these *pious divines* themselves, with all their zeal in its favor, be induced to set them a public example of this sort of worship, however faithful they may be to perform it in private. So closely is shame attached to that action which claims for its authority *the first great command of God!* What! Does an action which is authorized by the command of the Almighty, and sanctioned by a divine ceremony, require to be performed in the shades of darkness? Can darkness preserve the sanctity of an action which would be profaned by the light of the sun? Is it a shame for christians to obey a divine command in the presence of their christian brethren and sisters? If so, the command must surely be a very shameful one.

Probably these remarks may feel offensive to some of our professedly *good christian* advocates for this *great command*, and perhaps they will be ready to cry out, by way of exclamation, *Shameful! shameful!* We freely acknowledge that the subject is a shameful one, and deeply lament the shameful cause which has excited such remarks. We can truly say, in the language of Paul, "We have no fellowship with these unfruitful works of darkness, "but reprove them." And we also acknowledge with him, that, "it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of "them in secret."* But if it be a shame to speak of such shameful conduct among a people professing the christian religion, surely it must be a far greater shame to practice it.

It will doubtless be readily acknowledged, that he who lives in the practice of stealing, acts a far more shameful and dishonorable part, than he who takes up a full cross against every thievish propensity, and bears an open and decided testimony against it. Nor can it be disputed that such a testimony would be much more

* Eph. v. 11, 12.

offensive to a thief than to an honest man, especially if it should expose any of his own thievish conduct. The truly honest and virtuous, whether male or female, will never be offended at a testimony against any evil conduct of which they themselves are really innocent. Nor indeed can they feel unwilling to be enlightened respecting the evil nature and tendency of any act, concerning which they have hitherto been ignorantly guilty.

We would now seriously ask, Whence proceeds all this shame? It must have some foundation; and there can be no cause of shame in virtuous actions. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at "all. If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in dark-"ness, we lie and do not the truth."* Sexual coition claims for its sanction, an ordinance of God. But if it be an ordinance of God, it must have fellowship with God. The action, however, requires to be performed in the dark; therefore those who practice it, must necessarily walk in darkness. If then, *they say* it hath any fellowship with God, "*they lie*, and do not the truth." If there is no darkness in God, then nothing which proceeds from God, can require to be veiled in darkness. That shame which seeks to conceal its lascivious actions in the shades of darkness, and blushes to have them brought to the light, is the notorious concomitant of guilt; why else should it seek the abodes of darkness?

This guilt-denoting passion is not connected with the sexual intercourse of any other part of God's creation. The beasts of the field, the fowls of the air and the fishes of the sea, are total strangers to it. It is found no where but in the fallen race of Adam and Eve; and its very source is in that which many modern christians esteem as the greatest and most important of all their works on earth; that of generating their own species, and propagating immortal beings for the eternal world! The sense of shame connected with this act, is a most powerful evidence of its entire opposition to gospel light, purity and holiness; and therefore it can have no part in the work of regeneration. The idea of sanctifying these works of darkness, and of being regenerated souls, and born of God, while living in the gratification of them, is a grand deception of the enemy of souls, calculated to conceal from man the true nature and origin of his loss. Truly this is "the vail which is spread over all nations," and which God has promised to "destroy in his holy mountain."

4. *The vile use and shameful abuse of this lawless propensity.* This is an evidence of man's loss which one might naturally suppose could not escape observation. But as a blind man who is wandering in darkness and wallowing in the mire, cannot discover the darkness which surrounds him, nor the filth which covers him; so those who are spiritually blind cannot discover their own

* John i. 5, 6.

dark and lost situation, nor the filthiness of that lascivious nature which overspreads the world around them. If those professed moralists (not to say christians) who so strenuously advocate the works of generation, had no other motive in it, but to fulfil the primitive design of the marriage institution, and generate offspring in obedience to the will of God, they might, as natural people, have a plausible, if not a reasonable plea for so doing, provided they kept themselves within due bounds, and observed the order of nature, and the regular times and seasons of generation. But still it would be a natural, and not a spiritual work, and therefore could have no part in the work of Christ, which is spiritual.

But the lawless passion of lust has no respect to the will of God; the generation of offspring is not its object; nor does it regard the order of nature, nor the times and seasons of generation, even in the marriage state; its only motive is the gratification of its own lawless propensities. In the pursuit of these gratifications, how often is the law of nature violated! How often is this insatiable passion indulged when the state of pregnancy, or the courses of nature forbid the indulgence; or when the advanced age of the female denies all prospect of issue! How often is the marriage covenant violated, and the legitimate offspring intermixed with an adulterous issue! and what is still more shocking, how often are abortions procured to prevent issue!

Is not the bare mention of these abominations shocking to the moral feelings of humanity? and are not such things shamefully debasing to the fallen race of man? Then how offensive and odious in the sight of a holy and righteous God, must be the shameful and abominable crimes which are here exposed to view! Yet these are but a few of the numerous and shocking violations of the law of nature, the law of decency, the law of humanity, the law of purity and the law of God, which are committed, even in that state which is legalized by the laws of man, and sanctioned by a religious ceremony.

But this is not all. How often is that insatiable propensity indulged alone and in secret! and how many are the schemes and inventions to indulge it! and that too, even among those who make a great profession of christianity! Let the appeal be made to the consciences of those who plead the *great command* to justify their criminal indulgences. Is not the secret indulgence of that filthy passion, in the act of self-pollution, much more frequent with many modern christians, than secret prayer? Are there not very many, of both sexes, who can publicly seat themselves at the sacramental board, and professedly partake of the consecrated memorials of the body and blood of a dying Savior; and yet in their secret chambers, indulge their concupiscence, and shamefully pollute

their bodies with acts which they would blush to commit in the presence of a child?

Are not these "the unfruitful works of darkness" with which the apostle commands us to "have no fellowship." And shall christians indulge themselves in these things? Can God be honored thus? Is this fulfilling his commands? Is this living in obedience to the apostle's precept, which requires us to mortify the flesh with all its affections and lusts? Is this the secret devotion which God requires of christians? and will God accept of such devotions from such christians? or can they with confidence enter a temple, professedly dedicated to the worship of a pure and holy God, and presumtuously attempt to lift their defiled hands and deceitful hearts to HIM whose Allseeing eye is able to search the heart and try the reins of every creature?

This lawless passion is not only the most corrupt, but also the most unbounded propensity of man's fallen nature, and its actions are the least subject to restraint. All other evil propensities have some limitations to their actions. Profane swearing, drunkenness, gambling, frauds, thefts, robberies and murders, are chiefly confined to the more licentious and abandoned classes of society, and are under some restraint of the laws of the land. But the lawless passion of lust knows no bounds, is confined to no limits, and subject to no laws. Altho its shame is not hid, nor can it be confined within the limits of darkness, its most natural and congenial element; yet its practical advocates are numerous, and many of them highly honored and respected. All ranks and classes, from the prince to the beggar, from the sanctimonious professor of religion to the blaspheming infidel—all are anxious to support, and zealous to plead for this delusive passion, this deceptive enchantress, this heathen *Venus*, this adorable goddess of lust, under the deceitful mask of "an ordinance of heaven—a great command of God!"

How fascinating is the power, how extensive the dominion, how numerous the worshippers of this alluring goddess! Did the vast multitudes of heathen idolaters who worshipped the *Great Diana* of Ephesus, bear any proportion to the countless thousands of those called christians, who honor the lascivious *Venus* with the offerings of concupiscence? Look at the numerous devotees who surround her amorous shrine; look at the numerous females shamefully abandoned to her amours; look at the libidinous herd of debauchees haunting their infamous dwellings; look at our large towns and cities, more especially our seaports; see these haunts of lawless lust and infamy; see their worshippers of all classes, the high and the low, the rich and the poor, the bond and free, flocking and mingling, under the cover of darkness, with infamous prostitutes, all promiscuously engaged in these obscene adorations!

It has been stated by a noted writer, that in the single city of London, there were no less than nine hundred bawdy houses, and fifty thousand women who procured their living at the expense of their chastity.* Doubtless these receive their support from a far greater number out of all classes of dignified noblemen, professed gentlemen, merchants, clerks, tradesmen, mechanics, apprentices, sailors, officers, soldiers, and laborers of all sorts, who haunt these dwellings, and expend a considerable portion of their incomes in supporting these scenes of debauchery, while they indulge their concupiscence with the inmates. If this is the state of the city of London, what must be that of Paris, which, if not equally populous, is said to be more licentious? Yet these two cities contain but a small part of this description of people who inhabit the numerous towns and cities of Europe. Add to these the other three quarters of the globe, and what must be the numeral amount of the worshippers of *Venus*, both in and out of the bands of wedlock?

Are all the denominations of professing christians now in the United States, with all their professed worshippers of the true God, able to boast of half the number which constitute the multitude of devotees to Venus? We presume they are not. What then shall we think of the christianity of America, and indeed of the whole world? Are not the worshippers of *Venus*, in every country, far more numerous than the worshippers of the true God? And is not a vast portion of those who profess to worship the true God, far more zealous in the worship of *Venus?* And shall the worship of the true God be divided with the adorations paid to the goddess of lust? Never! never!

Did the sins of the antedeluvian world bear any proportion to those of the present day? And will it not be far more tolerable for the unbelieving Jews, in the day of judgment, than for those of the present generation, who profess to be followers of Christ, and yet secretly indulge themselves in such filthy and shameful abominations?

Doubtless the more sober and considerate part of mankind will readily censure these abominations, as lamentable deviations from the path of virtue, and very dishonorable to the dignity of rational beings. But let us examine, impartially, the nature of these things. Human nature, in its present lost state, is blind, partial and selfish; and very readily inclines mankind to justify in themselves, those practices which they condemn in others.

But let those who condemn the promiscuous and lawless lust of the inmates and devotees of public brothels, and at the same time, indulge the same propensity under the sanction of the civil law,

* Dr. Morse, in a former edition of his Geography. It has also been estimated by a magistrate of London, in "A Treatise on the police of the metropolis," that the number of females, of all classes, who live either wholly or in part by prostitution, amount to 50,000. *See Colquhoun's Treatise*, p. 340.

and the seal of a religious ceremony, examine with candor, the nature of that propensity which is the leading principle of action in both cases. Is there any real difference between the married and the unmarried, either as to the nature of that propensity, the sensations excited by it, the effect it produces, or the gratification experienced in it? Does the marriage ceremony alter the nature of either?* If so, why is not the shame removed from the action? Why must it still be covered in the shades of darkness? Why do not its shameful abuses cease? and why is it not subject to the order of nature, and to the times and seasons of generation?

Doubtless the sanction of a legal ceremony gives a licence which, assisted by the shades of darkness, removes all restraint from the feelings of those who do not look beyond it, especially where the mind has been previously polluted by lascivious gratifications; so that they can now indulge their concupiscence in the dark, without shame or remorse. But in the estimation of those who have been enlightened by the law of Christ, and who do not walk in darkness, this is no evidence of the purity or innocence of actions which require to be veiled in darkness to conceal their shame. So where a wrong education gives a bias to acts of violence, a declaration of war, and the ceremony of enlisting as a soldier, may remove all restraint to rob and plunder, murder and destroy, from the feelings of men who do not look beyond the authority which gives the licence. But those who view all wars as unchristian, unmanly and unjust, consider these enormities in a very different light. The nature of robbery and murder cannot be altered by a war manifesto; nor can the law of Christ be repealed by it. Nor is the nature of lust altered, nor the sensations of gratification purified by the legal ceremony of marriage. Hence the shame of the action is not removed, nor do its abuses cease.

Another shameful and disgraceful effect of that lascivious nature is, that children are frequently led into its gratifications by their older companions, and greatly corrupted by it. We believe that parents are not only insensible of the corrupt tendency of these things in their children, but carelessly ignorant of the shameful and shocking extent to which they often run in such practices, even at a very early age. It is not uncommon for children to become the corrupters of each others' morals in this way, by the opportunities afforded them in the season of attending school;† and by their frequent intercourse with their more corrupt companions, they often become more apt scholars in these shameful practices, than in the elements of literary instruction, and by this means a foundation is laid for future scenes of corruption and wickedness.

* We would not be understood to condemn matrimony, in itself considered, among natural people; for in its primitive institution, in the order of nature, it was good; but our object is to point out the abuses cloked under it, as now practised, not only by the world at large, but even by those who call themselves christians.

† This remark will apply with peculiar force to schools in the country.

Nothing can have a more fatal tendency to weaken and destroy the force of virtue on the infant mind, and strengthen the power of evil propensities, than the early indulgence of this sordid passion. In boys it is the incipient road to a life of debauchery, and prepares them to become, at the age of maturity, the shameless corrupters of female virtue. In girls, it leads them to become the easy, yielding objects of artful insinuation—the early victims of seduction; and without the seasonable protection of parents and friends, exposes them to become confirmed harlots, who, in their turn, will often prove the shameless corrupters of other heedless youth. Those who duly consider the natural tendency of these shameful indulgences in children, will be at no loss to understand the reason why that lascivious propensity is so much more powerful, at the age of maturity, in some people than in others.

The natural and direct tendency of these gratifications is to corrupt the mind, blunt the efforts of genius, debase the nobler feelings of humanity, deprave all the moral faculties of the soul, and swallow up the whole man in the filthy and ignoble passion of lust.* In short, the indulgence of this passion in children, not only tends to sink them below the order of the brutal creation, as before observed, but it often leads to the horrid crime of *bestiality* itself; a crime which, however shocking to the feelings of uncorrupted nature, is not unfrequent among the human race.

5. *This alluring passion holds out promises of pleasure which never can be realized.*

The promises of God are true and faithful; but the allurements of lust are deceitful and fallacious. Of all the promises and invitations which God has ever held out to man, to allure his mind to the practice of virtue, whether by the spirit of prophecy or otherwise, not one was ever known to fail or come short of the testimony given; but on the contrary, the reality of the promise has ever exceeded expectation, and often surpassed all imagination.

Not so with the promises of sensual pleasure: and here we would appeal to the experience of all who have ever listened to the alluring temptations of lust, and sought pleasure in its enjoyments. The youthful imagination, in listening to these temptations, is often wrought up to the highest pitch of expectation; but in the enjoyment, does it not invariably find itself more or less disappointed? Ask of those who, from their infancy, have kept themselves pure and uncontaminated with any of these filthy gratifications, even till the nuptial ceremony had sanctioned the deed, What were the sensations which succeeded the loss of their purity? The candid and honest answer will, invariably, be found to be, *Disappoint-*

* Many ancient heathen philosophers were so sensible of the natural tendency of this propensity to debase the moral and mental faculties, that they voluntarily took up their crosses against it, and pronounced those the most happy who had the least carnal connexion with women.

ment, shame and disgust. Such is the effect of carnal indulgence on the virtuous minds of those who had before lived in virgin purity: a powerful and incontestable evidence of its filthy nature and deceitful influence; and another proof that the lust of concupiscence is, indeed, the *forbidden fruit*, and a proof too, which a thousand human ceremonies, both civil and religious, can never invalidate.

6. *It is the natural source and foundation of all other evil propensities in human nature.*

As the inordinate propensity of lust was, from the beginning, the corrupt source from whence all human depravity originated, the truth of which is plainly and abundantly taught in the scriptures, and candidly acknowledged by some of the most eminent theological writers; so it continues to this day to be, obviously, the prolific source of evil, which engenders and nourishes the vilest passions of a fallen nature. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts, that war in your members?" And again; "When lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."* Here lust is plainly represented as the source of evil and the cause of death. The more this passion is indulged, the more it benumbs the virtuous feelings of humanity, and prepares its subjects for the worst of crimes.

This will readily appear if we examine the lives of those deep-stained villains, and abandoned ruffians, who infest human society, and trace the progress of vice from infancy to manhood. We believe that scarce an instance will be found where any one has run deeply into criminal practices, who has not first quaffed largely of libidinous indulgences. It generally happens that deceit, lying, petty frauds, profane and obscene language, and tippling, follow first in the train of vices which succeed to lechery. Nourished and strengthened by repeated prostitutions, and hardened by continued debaucheries, gambling, drunkenness, private thefts and high-handed frauds succeed; and lastly, burglary, highway robberies, murders and felonies of all sorts, swell the list of crimes and crown the villain. And here let it be remembered, that the foundation of these complicated villainies, is the inordinate indulgence of the sordid propensity of lust.

It is needless to adduce facts in proof of this position; they are too numerous and too well attested to be refuted. It may not be improper, however, to introduce here an extract from the representation of the Grand Jury, made at the court of General Sessions in the city of Albany, in June 1821.

"From all the observations which the grand jury have been able to bestow upon this subject, and the best information acquired, they are induced to believe, that nearly all the criminals now

* James i. 15. & iv. 1.

"confined in our gaol, were first corrupted by frequenting houses "kept up for prostitution."*

Such is thus publicly acknowledged to be the contaminating influence of this shameful gratification. It requires little more light to convince the reflecting part of mankind that the lust of concupiscence is, in truth, the corrupt source whence flows all iniquity, even *every evil work.*

Perhaps it may be urged that these things proceed from the abuses of that propensity, rather than from the propensity itself, which is supposed to be innocent and useful, when kept within due bounds. But we would ask, Where shall we find the man or the woman, who indulges that propensity at all, that does keep it within due bounds? And where is the man or the woman who never indulges it, by day nor by night, in any way or manner, but purely to obey the command of God, and raise up seed to his honor and glory? If any such can be found, they are, indeed and in truth, an honor to human nature, and an example to the fallen race of man. But if no such can be found, then let not that propensity be deemed innocent or useful, which produces such horrid corruptions among the human race.

The faculty of generation, being created of God, was at the beginning, as simple and innocent, in itself, as the faculty of eating and drinking; and had it never been corrupted, it might, as to its natural order, still have remained so; but it was violated by transgression, and corrupted at the very fountain, and brought into subjection to the inordinate passion of lust; and that passion still maintains its power and influence. Hence all who yield to that passion, yield the power and strength of soul and body to gender and nourish evil propensities. Therefore it is no wonder if they are afterwards unable to deny themselves and refrain from those evil propensities which still continue to grow stronger by repeated indulgences; while every virtuous disposition (if they ever had any) continues to grow weaker, till at length they find themselves utterly unable to do good, or to refrain from evil.

CHAPTER II.

Objections against the preceding doctrines stated and answered.

WE shall now proceed to state and answer some of the principal objections which are often advanced and strenuously urged as conclusive against the doctrines advanced in the preceding chapter.

Objection 1. It is argued that the very circumstance of man's being created male and female, is, of itself, a sufficient evidence

* See Albany Gazette of June 23d, 1821.

that God designed, from the beginning, that the earth should be peopled by them; and the certainty that there was no other possible means provided by which it could be peopled, is an undeniable proof that sexual coition was the means appointed, and the only means ever intended of God for the population of the world.

Answer. All this may be granted; but that it is conclusive against the doctrine which we maintain, remains yet to be proved. Man was created in a natural state, like all the rest of the animal creation, (tho much superior in form and faculties,) and being a natural man, he was required to keep the law of nature which was given him in common with them. That law required him to propagate his species according to the order of nature, at certain times and seasons, which the law itself dictated. And even admitting that the man had faithfully kept that law, he could never have risen to a higher state, without a superior law, but must have continued in that natural state, and subject to that natural law, like all the rest of the animal creation, to the end of time.

But man being destined, as God's representative on earth, to occupy a higher station than any other part of the creation, and God knowing the subtilty of the old adversary, and the weakness and inexperience of the new formed man, gave him a special and positive command, which was calculated not only to prove his obedience, but to be his strength and protection, in the line of obedience, against the snares and devices of the enemy. This command was to the man a law superior to the law of nature, and was calculated to raise him to a state of honor and dignity far above the animal creation; but it required the man's perfect obedience, as the only means by which he could preserve his power, and secure that protection and those benefits which the law was calculated to afford him. Had he kept this law, he would have been a rightful heir to eternal life. And as this law brought the man into a near connexion with his Creator; so the penalty of disobedience must be proportionably great; it must necessarily separate him from God in proportion to the nearness which the law had brought him to God: for the greater a man's privileges are, the greater must be his condemnation and loss in misimproving them.

But unfortunately for the man, through the subtle influence of the serpent, he was led into disobedience, and thus violated both the law of God and the order of nature. Having been created in a superior state, and favored with a superior law, he was in a condition to govern all the inferior creation, had he kept his obedience. But instead of hearkening to that superior law, the law of his Creator or even adhering to the law of nature, he yielded to the insinuations of the serpent, through the woman, which wrought upon his inferior, animal passions, and induced him not only to violate the law of his Creator, but also the law of nature. Hence he not only

fell from God, but his fall was below the order of nature, and of course below the brutal creation: for they had never violated the order of nature.

This being the state of fallen man, all his works of generation, while led by the propensities of his nature, are performed in this fallen state, not governed by the law of God, nor regulated by the law of nature; but influenced by the deceitful insinuations of the serpent, the lawless passion of lust. Therefore it is in vain for man now to plead the original law and design of God, in justification of his conduct in the works of sexual coition: for while he still continues to violate that law by the inordinate and unseasonable indulgence of his lascivious passions, he can have no just claim to it; but will unavoidably separate himself still further from God, and increase the measure of his loss by every repetition of the act.

Where is the civil government on earth which, after having confided an honorable and important trust to a distinguished citizen, would not, on finding him treacherous and unfaithful to his trust, immediately degrade him from his office, and deprive him of his delegated authority? Instances of this kind frequently happen in civil governments. And shall a just and righteous God be less careful and scrupulous than civil governments, and in matters too of infinitely greater concern? And with what confidence could any citizen who has been thus degraded, or any of his posterity, having still a copy of his original instructions and authority, presume to plead a right to the privileges and benefits of that authority, after it had been so basely violated? Yet such, in a comparative view, is the nature of the case with respect to the fallen race of man, at the present day, who plead the authority of God, given to Adam in the days of his innocence, to justify themselves in still abusing that authority to a far greater extent than was ever done by Adam.

The original law of nature was given of God, and was very good in its place and order, and might have remained so till repealed by the Lawgiver, had it not been violated and basely corrupted: and that it still continues to be violated, in the most shameful manner, has been sufficiently proved. Therefore, those who still plead the law of nature, or the law of God, to justify sexual coition, under a pretended necessity of maintaining the work of generation, ought first to examine their secret motives in it; and if they are able to lay the propensities of lust entirely aside, and enter upon that work without the influence of any other motive than solely that of obeying the will of God, in the propagation of a legitimate offspring, to be heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven, then they are able to fulfil the law of nature. But if they are not able to do this, then let them never plead the original command of God, nor the law of nature: for if they cannot come up to the law of nature, how

can they obey the law of God? It is therefore a vain pretence for fallen man to lay any claim, either to the law of nature or the law of God; for he has violated both, and forfeited his right.

It may be proper to remark here, that it is not the work of generation, in itself considered, in the order of nature, which is condemned; but it is that libidinous and lawless passion which was infused by the serpent at the beginning, and by which the work of generation has been, and still continues to be so basely corrupted; it is that which has filled the earth with abominations, and that is the object of condemnation. If that cursed nature could be entirely purged out of the natural man, so that his feelings could be wholly governed by the will of God, he would feel a very different sensation in this act, and would be in no danger of violating the true order of nature by it. But that lawless propensity has become so incorporated into the animal life of man, that he finds himself utterly unable to separate it. Hence, being completely under the power and dominion of that fallen nature, all his acts of generation, instead of being directed by the will of God, are influenced by the lust of concupiscence.* Thus "sin taking occasion by the commandment," has deceived him and "wrought in him all manner of concupiscence," and by it he was slain; that is, he lost that portion of the Spirit of God which was given to regulate and protect him in his natural state, and thus he died to God; and this is the death of the fall.†

Objection 2. The fruit of generation is a created being, of which God himself is the Creator; therefore the act of generation would be entirely fruitless without the help of God, who blesses it by the formation of a human being, complete in all its parts, and endowed with an immortal soul; hence it appears that God has not only designed and authorized the act from the beginning, but that he is himself the author and finisher of it, and has verily sanctioned it by his own works.

Answer. This is probably considered, by many, as an incontrovertible argument in favor of the practice of generation, notwithstanding its present corruptions. But it is a rule in logic that an argument which proves too much, destroys itself, and therefore proves nothing; which is evidently the case with this. For by the same rule we may also prove that God sanctions fornication, adultery, and even the basest kind of incest. And will any one presume to say that the Almighty sanctions these base crimes, because the act by which they are committed is productive of its natural and genuine fruits?‡ Who would acknowledge the agency

* The ridiculous objection, that this propensity is necessary to the production of offspring, is void of any foundation in truth: all the uncorrupted works of the Creator declare the contrary

† See Rom. vii. 8, 11.

‡ When Cain was brought forth, Eve said, "I have gotten a man from the Lord." But the scriptures declare Cain to be *of the wicked one*; and yet it appears that mankind in the present day, are as much deceived as Eve was, with respect to the work of generation, and really suppose the offspring of their own lusts, are children gotten from the Lord!

or sanction of a pure and holy God in the act of generation between a father and his daughter? And yet, unnatural and abhorrent as such a connexion is, it has often produced its natural offspring, as perfectly formed as that of the most lawful wedlock. The act is the same, and the fruit the same, in both cases; and therefore if the agency of God be necessary in the one case, it must be so in the other also.

But the truth is, God is not the agent in either case, having from the beginning, committed the agency of this, together with all other things which come within the province of human capacity, wholly to man, whose seed is in himself. Yet, while man remains in a state of nature, and is wholly ignorant of any superior law, he is required to govern himself by those just and equitable laws of nature which were given him for that purpose; and therein he may be justified until, by Divine goodness, he shall be favored with the superior laws of divine revelation. These laws, which are designed to lead him from a state of nature, and bring him nearer to God, must henceforth govern his actions; and by his faithful obedience he must be brought to God, or he can never find true happiness. Therefore, every lascivious gratification, and even every act of sexual coition, which is contrary to any order of nature, or to any divine manifestation known to the actors, must bring condemnation upon them, nor can they, if guilty, escape God's righteous judgment.

It may perhaps still be objected that, as man is not himself a creator, he cannot give existence to any creature without the essential aid of the Creator; and therefore his offspring must necessarily owe their existence essentially to God the Creator. To which we answer;

God created man, at first, from the dust of the earth, and endowed him with certain powers and faculties, suitably adapted to his nature, lot and situation, and constituted him a free agent. And as he possessed freedom of will and choice, he was therefore able to act perfectly free, to the extent of his capacity, without any control of his Creator; but as his powers and faculties were confined to certain limits, he could exercise them to the extent of those limits, but no further. His agency extended to the power of life and death; he was able by the power of procreation, which he possessed, to give life to beings like himself, and to take it from them: beyond this he could not go. But having laws given him to govern his conduct, and regulate the powers he possessed, he must of necessity be accountable for all his conduct. Thus man being a free agent, and having power to exercise his faculties in doing good or evil, in all cases, and under all circumstances, within the limits of his capacity, he does, in fact, prove his faithfulness or unfaithfulness by his own works, and thereby merits and will receive his reward *according to his works.*

Objection 3. This doctrine condemns and wholly rejects sexual coition, as corrupt and unclean in the sight of God, and contrary to the gospel of Christ. But upon the supposition that the whole world should embrace this doctrine, and actually live according to it, the human race would be extinguished from the face of the earth, in the space of little more than one hundred years.

Answer. This objection destroys itself, and proves directly the reverse of what the objectors intend: It proves that the principle of continence is not of the world; and "therefore the world hateth it." And as it is agreeable to the example of Christ, and is able to control the passions of nature, it must therefore be a heavenly principle,—a principle which rises above the sordid propensities of an earthly nature.

Mankind, who are sunk and lost in the fallen nature of the flesh, are very forward in devising means to support that nature, and always ready to object against any testimony which condemns it. It is not the extinction of the human race which the objectors fear; the smallest apprehension that their carnal pleasures are in danger, is far more alarming to them. Their pretended anxiety to prevent the world from coming to an end, is but a hypocritical mask to cover their lust. Millions of the human race may be cut off and destroyed by the horrid wars which are waged among mankind, merely to gratify the ambition of rulers, and glut the blood-thirsty passions of man; and these scenes of destruction may be approved and encouraged by the great body of the highest professors of christianity; and yet no fearful apprehensions are discovered about extinguishing the human race in this way.

But when souls are called upon for their own salvation's sake, to deny themselves and take up their crosses against their carnal pleasures, the cry of these hypocrites is, *The world will come to an end!* As tho it were a duty incumbent on man to preserve the lawless abominations of lust, which have so long corrupted the earth, lest the prevailing influence of this doctrine of continence and purity should destroy the world, by putting an end to all its iniquities. It appears evident from the language of these objectors, that they consider the doctrine of christian celibacy, which is designed to make an end of sin, and bring in an everlasting law of righteousness, as more inconsistent, unreasonable and unjust than the bloody mandates of war, which are attended with consequences far more distressing and deplorable to humanity.

It appears to be the general opinion of the professors of christianity, that the world is to be destroyed by fire; and many seem to imagine that a deluge of fire and brimstone will be poured out upon the earth, and destroy all its wicked inhabitants at once. But we would ask, which would appear the most reasonable and consistent with Almighty wisdom and righteousness; to destroy the

filthy abominations of sin by the purifying fire of the gospel of Christ, which mercifully allows lost souls to take up a full and final cross against their lustful passions, from which all these abominations spring, so that all who are willing, may be purified from their corruptions and become heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven; or by a deluge of natural fire and brimstone, to deprive them forever of all hopes of future happiness, which, according to the prevailing opinions of modern christians, must be the natural consequence?

We firmly believe the world will come to an end, and that it will be destroyed by fire. And we also believe and confidently testify, that this fire has already commenced; because we have felt its operation upon our own souls, and have found it to be, in very deed, a consuming fire to lust and pride, and every other corruption of man's fallen nature. This fire, we have no doubt, will prevail with increasing power, and many will yet feel its purifying effects; and all who come fairly into it, may depend on having their lust and pride, their selfishness and avarice, their deceit and hypocrisy, their envy, malice and hatred, together with all their evil deeds and evil imaginations, effectually consumed by its power; and when this burning is completed, they will find themselves among that happy number "upon whom the ends of the world are come."* But those who shall be found unwilling to come into this fire, by the way of the cross, and to consign their lusts and corruptions to its purifying flames, will at length be compelled to feel the fire of those very lusts burning in them, with inextinguishable fury, and they will not be able to help themselves.

Objection 4. But this doctrine seems to involve in it some unanswerable difficulties: for, admitting the abuses of sexual coition by the wicked, can that be any reason why christians should reject it? If every gift of God were to be rejected because it has been abused by the wicked, we should be deprived of nearly or quite every blessing we enjoy, and should even be obliged to refrain from eating and drinking, because these privileges are abused by drunkards and gluttons. What should occasion such an opposition between the doctrines of christianity, and the laws of generation, in themselves considered? Was not God the author of both? Did not the same God who created man male and female, and commanded them to increase and multiply, also send his Son Jesus Christ to introduce christianity into the world, and to preach the gospel to the married as well as to the unmarried? Why then cannot a man be a christian, and still live in a state of matrimony, and generate offspring, provided he does not abuse his privilege?

Answer. We should suppose that a proper attention to the remarks in the preceding chapter might preclude the necessity of

* 1 Cor. x. 11.

these questions; but the inveterate force of opinions so long established, and so congenial to the carnal mind, seems not easily overcome. Let the objectors bear in mind, and candidly consider the essential difference between the work of the first and second Adam, the cause of that difference, and the absolute necessity of maintaining a proper distinction between the children of this world, and the true followers of Christ, and they will find no occasion to ask questions of this kind.

We would observe in the first place, that a divine blessing, tho wickedly abused, is still a divine blessing; and the abuse of it by the wicked, can be no reason why the righteous should be deprived of the privilege of enjoying it, so long as it is given and continued by Divine Goodness. But there is an essential difference between a divine institution given for the government of mankind, and now in actual force, and one which has been disannulled to make room for a new and more permanent institution, even admitting that the disannulled institution had not been abused while it was in force. The disannuling of the law of Moses, and the establishment of the gospel institution by Jesus Christ, is no evidence that both were not of divine origin: and tho the Jews, as a people, still cleave to the law, and reject the gospel, they cannot be saved by the law; nor can they be saved by the gospel while they stubbornly reject it. Their rejection of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which was first sent to them, and which had been long foretold by their prophets, has ever been considered as very dishonorable to their nation, and a striking evidence of their great darkness, blindness and wickedness.

And shall the people of this generation, and in this enlightened age, bring a still greater dishonor upon themselves, and manifest a greater degree of darkness, blindness and wickedness, than the Jews did? Will they still cleave to an institution which, by its subjection to the violations of lust, has been attended with a curse to mankind ever since the transgression of Adam and Eve in the garden? And will they still continue these violations under the deceitful pretence of obeying a divine institution, when in fact, lust is the moving cause, and the greatest object in view is the gratification of their carnal pleasures? Yet when we view the inestimable sacrifice which mankind make to secure these sordid and momentary pleasures, what a contrast appears! It is nothing less than the sacrifice of a divine institution of peace and righteousness, purity and holiness, the most invaluable ever offered for the benefit of mankind. But we shall proceed to point out, more clearly, the distinction between the children of this world, and the children of God.

The Kingdom of Christ and the kingdoms of this world are essentially different from each other; and this difference ever has

been and ever will be strictly maintained in Christ; and no less is the distinction between the subjects of the different kingdoms. The children of this world are pursuing the things of this world, and living in the fallen nature of the first Adam; but the children of God are seeking salvation from sin, and redemption from that fallen nature. Those who follow the example of the first Adam, follow the example of a fallen progenitor, and like him, beget a fallen offspring. And tho mankind should continue in this practice for a hundred thousand years to come, they would still beget a degenerate and corrupt race, and still degenerate more and more; and in that way they could never be redeemed, but must still sink deeper and deeper into loss. But those who wish to find redemption, must find it by following the example of the second Adam, who came to lead mankind out of the nature and fallen state of the first Adam, into the nature and life of Christ.

The first Adam was created a natural man; "he was of the earth, earthy;" his work was to increase and multiply and replenish the earth in the order of natural generation; and had he not violated that order, and transgressed the law of his Creator, he might have done it in innocence and justification. He would not then have been instigated by the power of lust, to gratify the base and sordid propensities of an animal nature; but influenced by the agency of the divine law, he would have acted from the pure motives of duty. In so doing, instead of a degenerate race of murdering Cains, whose ruling passions are lust and rapine, he would have propagated an uncorrupted seed, whose innate innocence, nourished by the wise and godly example of their parents, would have been a powerful protection against the future insinuations of the adversary; and if a part should afterwards have yielded and fallen, they could not have corrupted the whole human race.

But Adam having yielded to the insinuations of the serpent, and violated the law of God, and by his example taught his posterity to do the same, he has corrupted the whole earth. And shall christians now continue to follow his base example? This is not the example of Christ; and therefore those who follow it, cannot, with any propriety, be called the followers of Christ.

Jesus Christ, the second Adam, the Lord from Heaven, is a quickening Spirit; he came not only to redeem mankind from that loss into which the first Adam had plunged them, but to raise them to a state far superior, even to eternal life, from which they could not fall; therefore he could not do the work of the first Adam. His work was to increase and multiply and replenish the Kingdom of Heaven, not by begetting a corrupt seed, after the example of the first Adam, but by redeeming lost souls through the work of spiritual regeneration. His work was therefore, diametrically opposite to that of the first Adam. And can christians continue

to do the works of the first Adam? If so, they must be the followers of the first Adam; they cannot be the followers of Christ: for it is impossible that they should follow both at the same time, seeing their works are so essentially different from each other. And this is the difference between them: The only true followers of Christ, are those who deny themselves of all the carnal propensities of a fallen nature, who do the works of Christ, and walk in obedience to his example; and these may, with strict propriety, be called christians.

On the other hand, those who live in the works of generation, follow the example of the first Adam. By doing his works, they necessarily become his followers; and therefore are not true christians: for, "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly."*

People may profess what they will; they may be called presbyterians, episcopalians, baptists, methodists, or what not; yet so long as they live in the works of the first Adam, and follow his example, they do not follow Christ. Those who assume the name of christians, do thereby implicitly profess to be a spiritual people. But what evidence do they give of being a spiritual people, while they live according to the propensities of a carnal nature? We would request the candid observer to notice the lives and conduct of those who, notwithstanding their profession, are led and governed by the same natural propensities as the non-professor, the Deist and Atheist, and compare them with those who, agreeable to their profession, do actually deny themselves of all the natural propensities of a carnal nature, and manifest by their fruits that they are governed by a superior law, in living a life agreeable to the example of Jesus Christ, and then say whether the practice of the former or latter appears the most consistent with the spirit of christianity.

Here is the deception which has so long blinded the eyes of the professors of chritianity; they see not the most essential difference between the *first* and *second* Adam: hence in their works they are the real followers of the *former*, while they follow the *latter* in profession only. The idea of following both at the same time, proceeds from the same delusive principle, which supposes that because we are the natural offspring of the first Adam, we are therefore bound to follow him in the work of generation; and that this is no impediment to our becoming the spiritual offspring of the second Adam, and following him in the regeneration. So readily is the the carnal mind of man led to believe that which it most desires, however contrary to the dictates of reason and truth. This is literally blending the flesh with the spirit, which the apostle Paul declares "are contrary the one to the other."†

* 1 Cor. xv. 48. † See Gal. v. 17.

As well may we talk of a man's travelling both east and west at one and the same time, as of his following Christ in the regeneration, while living in the works of generation. The thing is impossible; because the work of regeneration is the operation of the Spirit of Christ upon the soul, which destroys the nature of sin, and raises the soul out of the fallen nature of the first Adam, into the spiritual life of Jesus Christ the second Adam. And this can never be gained by any soul short of crucifying the flesh with all its affections and lusts. Yet so unwilling are mankind to have the fallen nature of the flesh crucified in themselves, that they will use every means in their power to nourish and preserve it, as tho they were even unwilling to go to Heaven without it; and will therefore contrive any way to carry it along with them. But their contrivance will all be in vain; for that nature must die before the soul can ever live to God, or find an entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.

All professors of christianity will agree that mankind are lost in Adam; and that there is no redemption but in and through Christ. "For as *in* Adam all die; so *in* Christ shall all be made alive." If in Adam *all die*, then it follows that the works of Adam bring death; consequently we must quit these works before we can be made alive in Christ. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God." So testified Christ; and here let it be again repeated. It is impossible for souls to find salvation from sin, under the light of the gospel, revealed in this day, short of utterly renouncing the work of generation, and crucifying the flesh with all its affections and lusts. Nor will any soul ever pass through the new birth and be redeemed to God, until the whole of that fallen nature, root and branch, is entirely destroyed out of the soul; and the longer a soul lives in the indulgence of that nature, the more difficult, painful and distressing will it be for that soul to crucify it; and this, he will find, must be his own work, or he can never enter the Kingdom of Heaven. If a man "must be born again," he must, in passing through this birth, be raised out of that nature in which he had his first birth; and become dead to all its propensities

Objection 5. But if this be so, says the objector, what is become of the good old patriarchs and prophets? They lived in the works of natural generation, and, as you say, followed the example of old Adam, in this respect, and not the example of Jesus Christ; your doctrine must therefore exclude them from the Kingdom of Heaven: and are they all lost?

Answer. They could not follow the example of Jesus Christ; because he had not then appeared; and he could not set them an example before he made his appearance. Those who lived before the coming of Christ, were under "the law of a carnal commandment;" and while they strictly obeyed that law, and lived up to

the light of God, given in their day, they found justification before God, and were blessed of God and protected from evil according to the measure of their light and obedience; and this was all they could do in that day. They could not be redeemed from a fallen nature, in that day; because, as Christ had not then appeared, the work of redemption could not take place. But Christ having been promised, as their Redeemer, to appear in the fulness of time, they lived and died in the faith of that promise; they looked forward to a future day, the day of full salvation and redemption.

Hence the apostle, in speaking of the faith of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the rest of the patriarchs and prophets, says, "And these all having obtained a good report through faith, re- "ceived not the promise: God having provided some better thing "for us, that *they without us should not be made perfect.*"* These having been faithful to walk according to the light which was revealed in their day, were owned and blessed of God: they departed in faith and rested in hope, believing that the time would come when the promised redemption would appear. Their having left their earthly tabernacles, and consigned those mortal bodies to the dust long before the day of redemption appeared, could not exclude them from its benefits when the time was fully come. For the work of redemption, being a spiritual work, must operate upon the soul, whether in the body or out of it; and therefore the separation of the soul from the body, cannot prevent this operation.

The patriarchs and prophets having been faithful unto death, and having rested in hope, and waited with patience God's appointed time, for the gospel of Christ to appear, their faith directed them into a willing obedience to it. They had now to pass through its purifying fire, in order to cleanse them from the fallen nature of the first Adam, before they could gain their redemption and be made perfect in glory. In this work of purification, they are united with those of the same faith in the body; so that those who are present in the body, and those who have departed out of it, become one in Christ; and being joined together in the same spirit, and under the operations of the same gospel, they are made perfect in righteousness together. Thus they become the real followers of Christ in their disembodied state, not having had that privilege while in the body; and in this manner, *they with us are made perfect.*†

This doctrine will doubtless appear new and strange to those who have always been bound, by the tradition of their fathers, to a different faith. And as they have been taught to believe no doctrine but what can be proved from the scriptures, they will naturally ask, Where is the scripture evidence of this? But let the dark veil of the flesh be removed from the eyes of the mind, and no one

* Heb. xi. 39, 40. † See Heb. xii. 22 to 24.

will then ask for scripture evidence to prove a doctrine which must carry with it, and in it, the most certain conviction. As the scriptures are but a record of those events which were revealed and brought to pass in former dispensations, it cannot reasonably be expected that they should contain doctrines which were not to be made manifest until the fulness of time came, unless it were by types and shadows, or the mysterious revelations of prophecy, which are but imperfectly understood, if understood at all, before the fulfilment takes place. Yet the spirit of the scriptures, if not pointedly expressive on these subjects, is in every respect, conformable thereto, without a single instance of any thing to the contrary.*

CHAPTER III.

The subject continued, in which further objections are stated and answered, & the doctrine of continence and celibacy confirmed.

We shall proceed to answer a few more objections which are frequently advanced against the doctrine of celibacy and continence.

Objection 6. The primitive christians did not all live lives of celibacy, but many of them lived in a state of matrimony, as we find in the New Testament, and the apostle Paul tolerated them in it, as appears in his first epistle to the Corinthians, chapter 7th, where he gives directions concerning husbands and wives. Were not these people christians?

Answer. If they were christians, the same apostle calls them carnal, and severely reproves them for their carnality.† But as the time had not then arrived for a full revelation of the man of sin to be made, and as that revelation was necessarily connected with the second coming of Christ; therefore these Corinthian christians, who were with so much difficulty persuaded to renounce their former licentious practices, were tolerated in living, in some measure, according to the course of the world. The same toleration was also extended to other gentile churches; but the church at Jerusalem seems to have preserved a greater measure of purity than any other. And tho it is clearly evident that the primitive christians had received a far greater measure of divine light than had ever before been revealed on earth; yet while they were still under the vail of the flesh, they could not have a full sight of that way of redemption which they still waited for; and therefore they were justified in walking in obedience to that degree of light which they had received; and as this was all they could then do, God required no more of them.

* See Acts ii. 34. 1 Pet. iii. 19. & iv 6. Rev. vi. 9, 10, 11. † See 1 Cor. iii. 1 to 4.

But the apostle Paul evidently saw further; he clearly saw that a day of further light and greater purity must necessarily take place, at the second appearing of Christ. Peter and John, and doubtless others, had similar views, and looked forward to a day of greater purity and holiness. But they also saw that a falling away would first take place, in which Antichrist would rise and exercise great power and dominion: "For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first."*

The falling away of the primitive church, which was attended with the introduction of a flood of corruption, in morals and manners, was the occasion of those dark and deceitful doctrines which have blinded the eyes of the professors of christianity to the present day. In every age, the great object of the spirit of Antichrist, in all his works, has been to counterfeit the religion of Christ. And what more effectual method could he devise, than to attach erroneous meanings to the names of christian doctrines, and blend them with practices which have not the most distant connection with the pure gospel of Christ? Hence arose that universal deception which supposes that *generation* and *regeneration* are perfectly consistent with each other; that christains may practice the generation of the flesh, and at the same time be subjects of the regeneration of the spirit; that is, that they may at once live according to the flesh and walk according to the spirit, regardless of the apostle's testimony that, "these are contrary the one to the other."† Hence also, *the resurrection of the soul* from the fallen nature of the flesh, is understood to mean, *a resurrection of the natural body* of flesh and bones, from the mouldering ruins of the grave.

The names of these, and many other doctrines of the gospel, are retained, while the real substance is wholly perverted and lost in antichristian darkness. This is undoubtedly the principal cause that modern professors of christianity do not discover the real distinction between the flesh and the spirit, and see the utter impossibility of following Christ in the regeneration of the spirit, while living in the practical generation of the flesh. Hence all those christians, so called, whether of primitive or modern times, who, under their christian profession, have lived in the practical works of generation, can be viewed in no other light than as carnal christians; and with all their christianity, they can never gain complete possession of the Kingdom of Heaven, until they are completely purified from the nature of the flesh and all its corrupt and debasing propensities. And tho in consequence of having obeyed the light which they had received, they may be free from condemnation; yet they cannot find their redemption short of passing through the purifying fire of the gospel.

* 2 Thess. ii. 3. † Gal. v. 17.

Objection 7. The doctrine of celibacy appears to be condemned by the scriptures, particularly in Paul's epistle to Timothy, where he gives the following testimony in plain terms: "Now the Spirit "speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart "from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of "devils;—*forbidding to marry*, and commanding to abstain from "meats."*

Answer. Perhaps no passage found in the sacred writings has furnished a more popular argument against a life of continence than this. It is indeed considered by many as sufficient to condemn the doctrine of celibacy altogether; and it is often urged as a testimony of condemnation against every religious society whose faith leads them to maintain such a life, however far they may be from "forbidding to marry," or "commanding to abstain from meats." But a little examination will readily show that it furnishes not the smallest proof against a life of conscientious celibacy, either in a society or an individual.

The objectors evidently suppose that the apostle's expression is to be understood in a literal sense; otherwise it would be useless to advance it as an argument in their favor; and therefore, for the sake of a fair examination, we will admit their literal construction.

Forbidding and *commanding* then, according to this sense, must necessarily imply power to enforce what is thus forbidden and commanded; otherwise no effect could be produced thereby; and of course the prediction of the apostle would have been of little or no importance. In order therefore to render the passage applicable to any society or denomination of people, that society must not only positively forbid to marry, and command to abstain from meats, but it must actually enforce its commands and prohibitions by a power sufficient to effect the object. It must also fill up the whole character described by the apostle; otherwise the charge must fail in its application: for there can be no real consistency in the charge, unless it be applied to a people in whom that character is fully displayed; and certainly it cannot, with any consistency, be applied to the United Society. With this Society, a life of continence and celibacy is a matter of conscience, proceeding from their religious faith, and therefore needs no "forbidding to marry" in the case; because the cross of self-denial is a voluntary act; and surely the apostle's prediction cannot apply to any such people.

Protestant writers have generally charged this, "forbidding to marry" upon the Church of Rome; and if we are to consider the apostle's expressions in a literal sense, there appears to be some foun-

* Tim. iv. 1 & 3.

dation for the charge.* It is stated by bishop Newton that, "As long "ago as the year 386, *Siricius* held a council of eighty bishops at "Rome, and forbade the clergy to cohabit with their wives. This "decree was confirmed by *Innocent* at the beginning of the fifth "century; and the celibacy of the clergy was fully decreed by "*Gregory VII.* in the eleventh century; and this hath been the "universal law and practice ever since."† These facts are confirmed by other ecclesiastical writers. We find in Mosheim, that *Pope Gregory*, in the year 1074, assembled a council at Rome, in which it was decreed, "That the sacerdotal orders should abstain from marriage; and that such of them as had already "wives, or concubines, should immediately dismiss them, or quit "the priestly office."‡

But these things afford no evidence against the doctrine of christian celibacy and continence, but rather the contrary. For these measures being adopted at such an early period of the apostacy, evidently show that the purity of the primitive church at Jerusalem, in this respect, was well known in the church of Rome; and that their object was to preserve the appearance of it in that church. But the lordly rulers of that corrupt church, having lost the true spirit of the gospel, by which that purity was maintained in the primitive church, attempted to make a show of sanctity and deceive the world, by counterfeiting this purity. And being wholly destitute of the true Spirit of Christ, which leads to purity, and of that divine love which governed the primitive church, they were under the necessity of enforcing their doctrines by arbitrary decrees. Thus their counterfeit purity and continence became a matter of compulsion, not of choice; and was therefore contrary to the very spirit of the gospel, which allows liberty of conscience to every soul.

But with all their arbitrary decrees and compulsive power, which were professedly designed to restrain the corruptions of the ecclesiastical orders, and to preserve and maintain purity among the dignitaries of their church, they never could reach the source of human corruption, nor restrain the libidinous passions of man. Their established fasts, including what they call *lent*, or forty

* It is but just to remark here, that the *R. Catholics* plausibly deny "forbidding to marry;" because it is not only allowed among the people at large, but is made one of their sacred institutions, and classed among their *seven sacraments*, and consequently is held in higher estimation by them, than by the protestants. The protestants on the other hand, scoff at the popish sacrament of marriage, and call it "a bastard sacrament," and say it is not any sacred rite at all; yet they themselves will call it *a Divine institution*, and often talk of *solemnizing holy marriage*.

† Newton's Dessertations on the Prophecies, vol 2. p. 99.

‡ Mosheim's Eccl. Hist. vol. ii. p. 489.

days abstinence from animal food, are considered by protestants as of the same arbitrary character; "commanding to abstain from meats." With a view to keep up the appearance of sanctity, after they had entirely lost the real power of the gospel, it seems they enjoined upon their subjects these days of abstinence, with other religious ceremonies, and thus required them to observe ordinances which, for want of true faith, they otherwise never would have observed as religious duties. But even admitting that their religious ordinances were of Divine authority, as they pretended, what could they gain by compulsive obedience? *Forbidding* and *commanding*, for the sake of enforcing religious duties, where there is no faith to induce a willing obedience, will answer no good purpose. God must have a willing people to worship him, or they never can worship to his acceptance.

But the United Society can have no occasion for any such coercive laws; nor will the faith of the Society admit of any compulsive or hypocritical obedience. Nor can any obedience which does not proceed from faith, be of any use: for *without faith it is impossible to please God.* Religion must be a matter of free and conscientious choice, or it cannot profit any soul. It is the true Spirit of Christ in the soul which must and does enable any one to bear the cross of self-denial. Without this, all "forbidding and commanding" is arbitrary and useless.

Hence the charge of "forbidding to marry," even when viewed according to the sense in which the objectors understand the apostle's testimony, can by no means apply to the United Society, who consider marriage, as practised by the world of mankind, to be merely a civil right, sanctioned by the laws of every civilized nation, and with which the Society has never had any inclination to interfere. Can any reasonable person suppose that the apostle, in that prediction, alluded to a life of conscientious celibacy, when he himself lived such a life, and plainly declared that he would that all men were even as himself? Surely the apostle would not condemn himself, and live in opposition to the dictates of his own prophetic spirit.

If we are to understand the expression, *commanding to abstain from meats,* in a literal sense, protestants can charge nothing upon the papists that will not apply with equal force to themselves. "To observe days of fasting (say they) we judge both scriptural and "rational; and a religious fast requires total abstinence from food." And what did the papists more? But the United Society maintain no such principle; and therefore the charge, considered in a literal sense, cannot possibly apply to this Society. And if the charge fail in respect to meats, it must of course fail in respect to marriage: for in the apostle's prediction, they are connected, and both are made to apply to the same class of people.

But we view the apostle's testimony in a very different light from that in which it is generally understood. We do not suppose that the prediction had any further allusion to that civil institution which is generally called marriage, than as a significant figure. "The Spirit speaketh expressly," saith the apostle. This prediction was therefore given in the language of the Spirit. And according to the testimony of the same apostle, "The natural "man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are "foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they "are spiritually discerned."* How then should the natural man be able to understand what the Spirit meant by "forbidding to marry?" Yet the lovers of carnal pleasure profess to know all about it, and confidently pervert the language of the Spirit into an argument to condemn the United Society, and favor their own carnal gratifications.

The apostle's testimony undoubtedly alluded to spiritual marriage. This appears evident from his own language on other occasions. "He that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit."† And again; "Neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman "without the man, in the Lord.‡ This is a great mystery," saith the apostle; "but I speak concerning Christ and the church.||— "For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you "as a chaste virgin to Christ."¶ In this consists the true spiritual marriage, or marriage of the Lamb, by which souls are enabled to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit. "Wherefore, my brethren, ye "also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye "should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the "dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God."** This is the marriage which the apostle invariably maintained, and is that which was forbidden by those apostates of whom he spoke; and which the lovers of carnal pleasure among all denominations, have always opposed, as being contrary to their carnal corruptions; because they are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God."

In this sense, the charge of "forbidding to marry," which the lovers of carnal pleasure are so ready to charge upon the United Society, may with strict propriety be retorted upon themselves. For, not content with the free and unlimited indulgence of their darling pleasures, they have ever been loud in their vociferations against that life of virgin purity which the apostle so strongly recommends as the only true spiritual marriage. While on the other hand, the United Society, tho they have conscientiously borne the cross of self-denial themselves, have ever been willing that all who differ from them in opinion, should freely act according to the dictates of their own consciences, without any disposition to molest

* 1 Cor. ii. 14. † chap. vi. 17. ‡ chap. xi. 11. || Eph. v. 32.
¶ 2 Cor. xi. 2. ** Rom. vii 4.

them in their pleasures, or hinder them from marrying whenever they please.

Objection 8. Jesus Christ himself did not condemn marriage; but on the contrary, he not only honored a marriage with his presence, but gave it an extraordinary and most miraculous sanction, by turning water into wine for the guests to drink. What greater evidence could any one ask to prove his divine approbation?

Answer. His enemies adopted the same mode of reasoning to prove him "a gluttonous man, and a wine bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners;" and doubtless they felt as much confidence in the strength of their argument as our objectors do in theirs. And why should they not? Did he not honor with his presence the assemblies of publicans and harlots? Did he not eat and drink with them, and work miracles for them? And where was the true-blooded Pharisee that would not have condemned a man for a wine-bibber, and a promoter of drunkenness, who would go and turn so much water into wine *after men had well drunk?* And could any man that would frequent the assemblies of such base characters, escape the scandal of being a partaker with them, or the charge of encouraging them in their wickedness?

So reasoned the Scribes and Pharisees, and so will all carnal men reason when they want to subvert the testimony of truth for the purpose of promoting their own carnal views. And indeed if we are to consider the attendance of Jesus at the wedding, and his miracle of turning water into wine, as any evidence in favor either of marriage or drunkenness, it must unquestionably have by far the greatest appearance of favoring the latter: for there is not the least evidence that he sanctioned the former, either by word or work; but his enemies found a very plausible reason to charge him with sanctioning the latter.

But with all their reasoning and all their evidence, they could never prove that the Lord Jesus ever sanctioned the evil practices of these sinners, or authorized them to continue in sin. It is true he did not condemn this darling practice of the world; nor did he condemn the adultress, tho she was taken in the very act; but after convicting her accusers, he bid her "go and sin no more." He was not sent into the world to condemn the world; that was not the object of his mission; "but that the world through him might be saved."* In making these visits, the Savior of the world had a nobler object in view, which was to preach the gospel to poor fallen creatures, who were thus lost in sin and wickedness, and to teach them, by precept and example, a better manner of life. It was therefore necessary that he should come down to them in their fallen and lost state, and find them where they were lost, and ren-

* John iii 17.

der himself accessible to them in that state, in order to reclaim them, or they never would have been saved by him, but must still have remained under their loss.

The miracle of turning water into wine, on that particular occasion, which is the only instance we have on record, and doubtless the only one which ever took place, was for a far more important purpose than to sanction matrimony or promote intemperance. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and "manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him."* By this he showed forth the divine authority of his mission, proved his God-like power, and confirmed the faith of his followers. But this was not all: It was designed and eminently calculated to be a figurative representation of his own spiritual marriage at the period of his second coming, and of that heavenly wine, which he afterwards spoke to his disciples of drinking with them, in his Father's Kingdom.†

Objection 9. This doctrine of celibacy, if generally admitted, would overthrow the institution of matrimony; the consequences of which would be very shocking to society. Abolish this institution, and all those civil and religious ties which bind families together, would be severed at once. The legal descent of inheritance, the property of heirs, and the ties of consanguinity would be no longer known. Those social connections which unite husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, and on which depends the very foundation of human society, would be entirely destroyed, and mankind would soon be reduced to a state of anarchy and confusion.

Answer. This objection, if applied to mankind in a natural state, would indeed appear formidable; but when applied to the followers of Christ, it is more specious than solid. As an objection against the doctrine of christian celibacy maintained by the United Society, it is without foundation. That practical celibacy and christian continence, which we consider as the great privilege of the true followers of Christ, in this day of his second appearing, is very far from interfering with any useful institution of civil society. The children of this world and the followers of Christ are two distinct orders of people. "The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage;" and have a natural right to all the civil institutions of the country to which they belong, so long as they are subject to its laws and ordinances. "But they who shall "be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection "from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage."‡ The followers of Christ are governed by the law of Christ, which is a law of justice and holiness; and so long as they do not interfere with the civil institutions of men, they cannot be chargeable with severing the bonds of civil society.

* John ii. 11. † See Matt. xxvi 29. & Rev. xix. 7, 9. ‡ Luke xx. 34, 35.

We consider matrimony to be a civil institution, and as such, it is both useful and necessary for mankind in their natural state; but it does not belong to the true followers of Christ; and for that reason they have nothing to do with it. As members of a christian institution, established by the law of Christ, and wholly unconnected with the civil, political and religious institutions of the world, it is inconsistent with our christian faith to interfere with any of their concerns. But at the same time, we are perfectly willing that every such institution, which produces any beneficial influence on its members, should be freely supported by those to whom it belongs, and whose concern it is to support it; and it is right and just that all people should act their own faith in this, as well as in all other matters.

The apostle Paul taught the Corinthians that it was "better to marry than to burn;" and we have ever acknowledged it better to marry than to do worse. We readily admit that the institution of marriage is useful in its place; because it has a tendency to prevent many evils in society which could not otherwise be avoided. And for mankind, in their present state, it is absolutely necessary; because without it, the excesses of lawless lust would destroy every vestige of good order in society, and produce confusion and ruin among the human race. We will even admit that marriage is honorable in a state of nature, where the parties enter into it from honorable and conscientious motives, and are honestly and sincerely united in their endeavors to make an honorable use of it. But its frequent, fraudulent and shameful abuses are disgraceful to the parties, and cast a shameful blot upon the institution itself.

But tho we acknowledge the marriage institution to be both useful and necessary for the world in its present state; yet for the followers of Christ, who are called to forsake the course of the world, and to crucify the flesh with all its affections and lusts, it is neither necessary nor useful, but the contrary; it therefore forms no part of their duty, and can have no place among them. Their union is spiritual, and needs no fleshly support; their parentage is spiritual, and produces no fleshly offspring; their relation as brethren and sisters is spiritual, and can have no dependence on fleshly relation; their inheritance is spiritual, and cannot be controlled by human laws and institutions. Their temporal property, which is necessary for the support of the body while in this life, is regulated by a sacred compact, being, by mutual agreement, consecrated to religious uses, for the benefit of the whole body; and as such, it descends to their spiritual heirs in the same united capacity. So that all those difficulties concerning temporal property, so common among natural heirs, are prevented by the very nature of the institution, and, unless its rights are infringed upon by lawless usurpers from without, the descent of inheritance occasions no uneasiness to the Society.

This spiritual relation in the church of Christ, is produced by "the law of the Spirit of life." It is the relation claimed by Jesus Christ, and he acknowledged no other. "Whosoever shall do "the will of my Father which is in Heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother."* This relation is governed by the law of Christ, which is a law of righteousness and peace; and this law which governs the church of Christ, supersedes the necessity of human laws and human institutions to regulate its own internal concerns. And we have found by experience, that this law is a superior remedy against all those scenes of confusion and disorder, which are so common in the domestic circle, under a state of matrimony; and that it is more eminently calculated to promote the true spirit of union and harmony in society, than all the laws and institutions of matrimony, or any other law or institution ever devised by man.

CHAPTER IV.

The figurative import of Circumcision and other ceremonies under the law.

As Circumcision was an important institution given to Abraham, as the typical father of the faithful, and was continued to his posterity, as a primary and abiding institution, through all the law and the prophets, until the coming of Jesus Christ, it will be necessary to make some remarks upon this subject.

It is generally acknowledged that the ceremonies under the law were typical of gospel ordinances; that they were figures or shadows of something to be fulfilled in substance under the gospel; and that these "carnal ordinances," as the apostle calls them, plainly pointed to the spiritual work of Christ in his first or second appearance, or both. But among all the types of the law, none could be more important than that of circumcision, not only because it was the first, and the foundation of all the rest; but also because it was the very seal of the covenant of promise given to Abraham, and typified a most important institution to be given to the faithful children of God in the latter day, and which was to be a peculiar mark of distinction between them and the rest of mankind.

A figure, to constitute a real type, must have a proper resemblance to the substance which it is designed to prefigure; otherwise it is not a type. It was therefore necessary that the institution of circumcision should bear a real analogy to that gospel institution which it was intended to point out. It is a prevailing opinion among many who consider water baptism as a gospel institution, that it was designed to supply the place of circumcision under the

* Matt. xii. 50.

law; some indeed suppose that circumcision was a type of water baptism. In this however, there must appear an obvious inconsistency: for there is no kind of analogy between baptism and circumcision; and water baptism itself, was but a type of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. This appears evident from John's own testimony: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he "that cometh after me, is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not "worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and "with fire." Therefore, to say that circumcision was a type of baptism, is nothing less than calling it *a type of a type*, which is an absurdity.

The circumcision of the male in the flesh of his foreskin, was a significant mark of mortification in that particular member of the flesh in which is found the seat of its carnal pleasures. This seal of the typical covenant made with Abraham, was the most lively figure ever given to man, of the mortification of the very source of iniquity, by the spiritual work of Christ, and of the complete destruction of that carnal pleasure received from that source, in the act of sexual coition.

As circumcision was the seal of the covenant of promise to Abraham and his posterity, under the law; and as none were considered as God's covenant people without this seal, whatever degree of conformity they might observe in other respects; so it was a very plain manifestation that the seal of the covenant in Christ, was to consist in the cutting off, and total rejection of fleshly lust, by a life of self-denial and the cross. This is the very foundation of the true cross of Christ, and the separating line between "the children of this world," who "marry and are given in marriage," and "the children of the resurrection," who "neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like unto the angels;" because they live a spiritual life. And without this seal, this distinguishing mark of the cross of Christ, no soul can be in the real covenant of Christ, revealed in this day, whatever profession he may make, or whatever duties he may perform, in other respects.

This figure is so obvious and striking, that it seems as tho none could mistake it, excepting those who are blinded by an obstinate determination to maintain the carnal life of the flesh, at all events. There is nothing else to which circumcision, as a type, can bear any consistent analogy. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." But as the law was only figurative of spiritual things, and not the real substance; therefore if its types do not bear a plain resemblance to their antitypes, then it is in vain to seek by them to find the knowledge of sin. Man has been too long imposed upon by false systems and imaginary theories, which have no foundation in truth, nor any consistency in themselves. Certainly a figure of so much importance as circumcision evidently was, under the law,

ought to be well considered by those who profess to be under the light of the gospel; lest, unhappily, they lose both the knowledge and the benefit of the most important principles of the gospel.

Let those who consider water-baptism to be the antitype of circumcision, (for if it was substituted under the gospel in lieu of circumcision, it must be the antitype,) consider also, that upon this principle, the antitype is not so mortifying to the flesh, nor so deep and lasting as the type. This clearly involves the absurdity of making the shadow of a substance more substantial than the substance itself. What figure could have been formed, under the law, to represent more plainly the cutting off and rejection of the carnal works of the flesh, under the gospel, than outward circumcision, or cutting off the foreskin of the flesh? This not only wounded the flesh in such a manner that the mark remained visible ever after; but it took blood, which is the life of the flesh, from that very member in which is found the seat and center of all the pleasures of lust.

The object of the covenant with Abraham, which was established and confirmed by this seal, was to show that under the gospel dispensation, the everlasting seal of the spiritual covenant, which was to distinguish Christ's chosen people from all others, must be that cross which destroys the life of fleshly lust. "For he is not "a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision "which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew which is one in- "wardly: and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and "not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."* This then is the true seal which hath praise of God, but not of men: for nothing is so opposite to the natural inclinations of fallen man as this seal, which is, in very deed, the cross against the lust of the flesh.

It may perhaps be objected that circumcision, when compared with this cross, is not a perfect figure; because males only were the subjects of circumcision; and therefore it could not properly typify that cross, which seems to be enjoined on females as well as males. True indeed, males only were the subjects of circumcision; but if sexual coition ceases in the male, it must cease in the female of course.

But there was another legal ceremony respecting women, which was sufficient to balance the cross of circumcision in the male, and which was not only a confirmation of the impure nature of the works of generation, but an evident token that these works were to be excluded from the church of Christ, which is the spiritual sanctuary of God. A woman who brought forth a male child, was counted unclean, under the law, seven days; and on the eighth day the child was to be circumcised. And even then, the

* Rom. ii. 28, 29.

woman was not allowed to come into the sanctuary, nor touch any holy thing, for the space of forty days from the birth of her child. After the birth of a female child, the time of her uncleanness and separation from the sanctuary was doubled, extending even to eighty days. After this she was required to bring a sin-offering and a burnt-offering to the priest, at the door of the tabernacle, where they were to be offered, before she could be admitted into the sanctuary with those who were accounted clean.*

Therefore, as circumcision was a figurative ceremony of purification to the male; so likewise these legal injunctions were figurative ceremonies of purification to the female; and both were designed to typify that state of purity and separation from all the works of generation, which were to be required of the church of Christ under the gospel dispensation. But why was the time of the woman's separation from the sanctuary doubled after she had borne a female child? This was to show that the female could not find her lot and order in the spiritual creation of God, until the second gospel dispensation, or second appearing of Christ, when the Spirit of Christ, manifested in a woman, should redeem the female character, and bring her into her proper lot and order in the new creation.†

Again: The law enjoined ordinances respecting sexual coition, which applied to both male and female, and which clearly pointed out the sinfulness of that nature in the sight of a pure and holy God.‡ Every act of that kind excluded the parties from the camp, and from the society of those who were accounted clean; they could by no means be admitted into the sanctuary, nor come before the Lord at any time, nor partake of any holy thing, without being first ceremonially cleansed and purified from those works. When Moses was ordered to sanctify the people, and prepare them to appear before the Lord at Mount Sinai, he commanded them saying, "Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives."‖ If this was not an unholy act, why did Moses give this charge?

As the ceremonies of the law were but types and figures of things to come, they must have their antitypes, and be fulfilled in substance under the gospel. If therefore these works of the flesh were not, in their very nature, unclean, and if they were not finally

* See Lev. chap. xii

† The man found his lot and order in the first appearing of Christ, who appeared in the male, (in the person of Jesus,) which was the first gospel dispensation, or antitype of the first temple. But the second gospel dispensation, which was prefigured by the second temple, was first manifested in the female, and was called *the second appearing of Christ*, in which the woman, as well as the man, is restored to her proper lot and order in the new creation.

‡ See Lev. xv. 18. ‖ Exod. xix. 15.

to be excluded from the spiritual sanctuary of God, then we would ask why they were declared unclean under the law, and excluded from the sanctuary of Israel, which was but a type of the true gospel sanctuary? Was the law more pure than the gospel? or was uncleanness under the law to be counted cleanness under the gospel? Was the type more pure and holy than its antitype? or in other words, can we rationally suppose that the temporal and typical sanctuary of Israel was more pure and holy than that sanctuary of holiness which is established in the church of Christ, as a spiritual sanctuary? And if those works of the flesh which were so pointedly marked out under the law, were not sinful, why did the law require a sin-offering? Will God require a sacrifice for sin, where there is no sin? Certainly not.

These injunctions and restrictions were evident tokens of the unclean nature of those acts, and plainly typified the purity which God would require of souls under the dispensation of the gospel. In nothing short of this can the types and shadows of the law be answered with any degree of consistency. In nothing short of this can the righteousness of the law be manifested in us, "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Hence it is evident that circumcision and other legal ceremonies clearly pointed to a life of self-denial and the cross of Christ, by which souls receive the washing of the regeneration, and the purifying fire of the gospel, which is the real baptism of the Holy Ghost; and that nothing short of this can entitle any soul to the privilege of entering into the camp of the saints, and worshipping God in the spiritual sanctuary, of which the camp of Israel and the sanctuary of Jacob were but types and figures.

CHAPTER V.

A few remarks on the nature and typical design of the Jewish wars, showing that the law could not decide the future state of the soul.

THE advocates of war who make a profession of christianity, often urge the example of the Jewish wars, directed by Divine authority, as an argument in justification of the lawfulness of war under the dispensation of the gospel. And tho some of them endeavor to enforce this argument upon the principle that the nature of God is unchangeable, and that the nature of man is essentially the same in all ages; yet the argument would doubtless appear very inconsistent, even in their own view, did they but consider the most essential difference between the law and the gospel, and the nature, tendency and design of God's work, as it respects the final lot of man. The same argument would apply, with equal force, to all the ceremonies of the law, and indeed to every thing

which God ever commanded or authorized among men, whatever might be the occasion or circumstances which required it.

When God deals with mankind, he always deals with them according to their situation and circumstances, and in a manner best calculated to answer his own Divine purposes, and at the same time, to give them a fair opportunity of proving themselves by their works. The work of God is an increasing work, and has always been attended with an increasing degree of light to man, from one dispensation to another, ever since the fall. And as the light of God has increased among mankind; so righteousness has increased in those who were obedient to that light. In the same proportion also, has wickedness increased in those who were disobedient.

But the light of God to man, from the fall to the coming of Christ, was very limited. Even under the law, which was given to regulate man in his natural and fallen state, and which was but a shadow of things to come, he could have, at most, but an imperfect sense of a future state, compared with what was revealed after the coming of Christ. For this reason, the promises and blessings to the faithful and obedient, and the threatenings and curses upon the wicked and disobedient, were mostly of a temporal nature.

By the law was the knowledge of sin; and the work of the law, as it respected the then existing state of the Israelites, was to search out and condemn the transgressions committed under it: hence the severity of its penalties. The law was a law of justice, and, in most cases, enjoined immediate execution upon the offender. It required strict and ample justice between man and man, and between God and man. It required "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." It inflicted the penalty of death by stoning and burning for specific transgressions, such as profaning the sabbath, blaspheming the name of the Lord, rebellion against parents, adultery, fornication and the like.

The law also enjoined the total destruction of enemies, with all their possessions, wives and children. In many cases, it gave no quarter in battle; but death and destruction was the decided portion of enemies, without pity or compassion. These severities, considered in a natural view, at the present day, would appear shocking to humanity. Yet they were executed by Divine authority, and when viewed in their true light, they appear not only perfectly consistent with all the displays of Divine Justice, but they are also full of solemn instruction and warning.

The law was figurative of a future state of things which were to take place under the gospel; and therefore it is not improperly called, "a law of types and shadows." But its most mysterious injunctions had a more particular reference to the last gospel dispensation, which was to accomplish a final settlement with all souls, in which the mystery of God was to be finished, and every

creature to be rewarded "according to his works." The rewards of obedience, and the penalties of disobedience, under the law, were designed to show that every work must finally "be brought into judgment, with every secret thing;" and that every one must receive his reward according to the nature of his works.

As the law required "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth;" so the future punishment of sinners, for every injury done to their fellow creatures, must be repaid in exact proportion to the nature of the offence, without any mitigation whatever. As stubbornness and rebellion against parents, after all their endeavors to reclaim the rebel, was punished with death and destruction; so rebellion against the law of Christ, under the gospel dispensation, after all the warnings, reproofs and instructions of the gospel, will finally cut the soul off and consign him to destruction, without the possibility of recovery. As a profanation of the sabbath and blasphemy against God, were equally sinful, being rebellion against the sacred ordinances of the law, and were condemned to the same punishment; so those who wickedly and wilfully violate the laws of Christ, under the light of the gospel, must share the same fate. As adultery, fornication, incest, and all manner of uncleanness of that nature were punished with death and destruction, by stoning or burning; so all kinds of impurity and defilement, so contrary to the perfect purity of the Spirit of Christ, unless purged from the soul by the purifying fire of the gospel, must prove its final destruction.

The destruction of enemies in war, with all that pertained to them, was designed to show that, in the spiritual warfare of christians against their carnal corruptions, which are the enemies of the soul, no quarter can be allowed. Every evil propensity, together with all the corruptions which have been engendered by the indulgence of these propensities, and every thing which has any connection with a life of wickedness, must be utterly destroyed and purged out of the soul, before it can find complete redemption. This is the work required of every christian soul under the dispensation of the gospel. But as God, by his providence, assisted the Jews against their enemies, while they were perfectly obedient to his commands; so Christ, by his Spirit, will assist every honest and truly faithful soul, in this work.

The destruction and expulsion of the heathen nations out of the land of Canaan, was just; because it was the just reward of their wickedness;* and it was a very striking figure, and was eminently calculated to show that all sin, all manner of wickedness, and every thing which had a tendency to gender evil, must be purged out of the church of Christ, and be driven from the spiritual Canaan; otherwise the whole church is exposed to be corrupted, and its

* See Lev. xviii. 24, 25 & 27. also xx 23.

members ruined and lost. As the children of Israel were warned of the danger of suffering one of the heathen nations to remain in the land; so Christ warns his people against tolerating one sin in his church.

But "the law made nothing perfect;"* and therefore "Christ is "the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."† As the dispensation of the law was a temporal dispensation, it was beneficial to the Jews in a temporal view. Its blessings to the obedient, and its curses on the disobedient, were mostly limited to this life; and tho it took the life of the body, it could not decide the final state of the soul in the spiritual world. This was to be the work of the gospel: for Christ came "to redeem them that were under the law," as well as them that were not; because the law could not do it. For the same reason Moses was under the necessity of enforcing obedience by promises and threatenings of a temporal nature; while Christ was able to enforce his precepts by the retributions of eternity.

Thus the operations of the law, by being confined to this life, could only extend to those who were under the law; while the operations of the gospel can and will extend to all souls, throughout all ages of the world, whether in the body or out: for no soul can ever obtain redemption but by the gospel. Therefore a future state of trial was reserved for those who had lived under the law, as well as for all others, both for those who had been obedient to the law, and those who had not. This was just and equitable; not only because it gave to those who had lived in subjection to the law, a further opportunity of proving their subjection to the gospel, which requires a greater cross against the evil propensities of a fallen nature than the law enjoined;‡ but also because it afforded another trial to those who had abused their temporal probation under the law, by which they might (if they chose) seek their redemption by their obedience to the gospel. And to this they might be the more strongly excited by a remembrance of the punishments inflicted upon them for transgressions under the law.

"For this cause was the gospel preached to them that are dead, "that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live "according to God in the spirit."|| "For this cause also, Christ "once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring "us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the

* Heb. vii 19. † Rom. x. 4.

‡ Those evil propensities which pertain to the fallen nature of man, and which lead him into sin, can never be destroyed by the death of the body; for they are propensities of the mind, not of the body; therefore nothing but the gospel of Christ, which operates upon the mind, and which is the power of God unto salvation, can ever purge these corrupt propensities out of the soul. Hence nothing short of the gospel can ever redeem the soul from the reigning power of sin.

|| "That they might be judged according to men in the flesh." This expression of the apostle evidently shows that they were not men in the flesh.

"Spirit; by which also he went and preached to the spirits in "prison," who for their wickedness had been destroyed by the flood in the days of Noah.* As man first fell into sin in this world, it was necessary that the gospel of salvation should first be preached on earth, to men in the flesh, and thence descend into the world of spirits, to the millions who had never heard it in this world. And that Jesus Christ, after his crucifixion, did actually descend into the mansions of the dead, and there preach the gospel to lost souls, is as true as that God is a just and equitable Being. After his resurrection, he appeared to his disciples and commanded them, saying, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."†

Hence it is evident that all must hear the gospel by some means or other. And as "there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved," but the name of Christ; so none can be saved who have not in truth heard that name. But as the greater portion of mankind have died without even hearing the sound of that name in this world; therefore they could have no chance of knowing the way of salvation in this life. But so sure as God is righteous, they will have a fair call of the gospel of salvation: for the everlasting destruction of such souls from the presence of God, without their having ever known the means of escape, would effectually destroy the attribute of righteousness in God.

Therefore, Christ having come to open the way of life and salvation for all souls, that all might have a free offer of the gospel, and receive their just reward in a future state, he has himself preached the glad tidings of salvation, both in this world and in the world of spirits; and has also commissioned his ministers to do the same. Hence his faithful and true witnesses, after putting off this mortal body, will find a work to do in preaching the gospel to those benighted spirits who never heard its peaceful sound in this world; and millions of souls who, ignorant of the true spirit of the gospel, have been compelled to shed each others blood, and give up their lives on embattled plains, will joyfully embrace these merciful calls, while those ambitious rulers, who impiously waged the war under a christian profession, together with their blood-thirsty chiefs, who marshalled their hosts on the sanguinary field, and profanely compelled the battle in the name of God, will in their turn be compelled to reap the reward of their own doings in the regions of darkness and despair.‡

* See 1 Pet. iii 18, 19, 20. and iv. 6 † Mark xvi. 15.

‡ The doctrine of a probationary state beyond the grave, will probably appear new and strange to those who have always considered death as the closing scene of man's probation for eternity. But it is a doctrine perfectly consistent with all the precepts and instructions of Jesus

These solemn truths may perhaps be treated with contempt and ridicule by the incredulous advocates of war; but they will yet be seen, felt and acknowledged as serious realities. If the advocates of war, who profess the christian religion, did but understand and duly consider these things, they would never more plead for a barbarous and sanguinary principle because it was once authorized by the Almighty, in a barbarous state of society, and among a benighted race of beings who, at that period, were incapable of receiving any thing better; and which the Divine Being wisely improved for an instructive lesson to future ages and generations, who ought, by this time, to be better able to view it in its true light.

Notwithstanding the Jewish wars were authorized by the Almighty; yet when Jesus Christ appeared, he became "the end of the law for righteousness;" and therefore he disannulled all the laws of war, together with all those sanguinary and ceremonial statutes which had been authorized under the dispensation of types and shadows, and began to establish new laws for the government of his followers. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou "shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: But I say unto "you, Love your enemies." From that period no follower of Christ ever had any divine authority to engage in war. And had all who have since professed the christian name, been faithful to obey this precept, this earth might have been, long ere this time, a terrestrial paradise.

CHAPTER VI.

An illustration of the progressive increase of the work of God from the creation to the present time.

THE work of God, from the beginning, was intended and wisely calculated to be an increasing work. This appears evident from the account we have in the scriptures of the progressive operations of the work of creation and providence. In the creation of the

Christ and his apostles, and one which was maintained by the primitive church while that church stood in its greatest purity. It is also a doctrine which has been clearly and explicitly taught by Mother Ann, and fully confirmed to the society by many visions and divine revelations to the present day. But after the declension of the primitive church, and during its corruptions under the papal hierarchy, this gracious doctrine of the gospel, so just and equitable, and so full of mercy to the fallen race of man, like that of the confession of sin, (commonly called auricular confession,) was sacrilegiously perverted to the purpose of extorting money from the deluded multitude. And hence these doctrines were both rejected by the protestant reformers, and rendered obnoxious to the people upon the supposition that they were the inventions of the church of Rome.

natural world, as recorded in the first chapter of Genesis, the work of God came forth, in a regular gradation, from less to greater degrees of perfection. After the earth was formed and established in its order, the grass of the field, the herbs and trees succeeded in their order. Then followed the living animals in their order; first the fishes of the sea and the fowls of the air, whose life and perfection exceeded all that had been displayed in the vegetable creation. Next followed the beasts of the field, which occupied a still higher grade in the order of the animal creation, being more highly important, because they were designed for more general and essential service. Man, the last of all, came forth as the most noble part of this lower creation: and in man, including male and female, was the order of the natural creation completed.

But there was still to be an increasing work in the order of Divine Providence. The fruits of the earth, in their established order, each according to its kind, must come to perfection in their proper times and seasons, under the influence of the natural elements, by a regular and gradual increase from the seed to the full grown plant or tree, and from the blossom to the fruit in its maturity. The same regular increase is observable in all the animal creation. The human race also, from the conception to the birth, and from infancy to manhood, in the order of nature, are brought to their highest attainment of natural perfection by the progressive hand of time. The ages of the world also, have their regular and gradually increasing operations upon mankind, in bringing them from the lowest state of ignorance and barbarism to the highest degree of civilization. The productions of man in the works of art are also gradual and progressive, from less to greater degrees of perfection.

When this progressive increase in the natural world is seen and understood, why should it appear strange or unreasonable to believe that, in the spiritual world, there is also a regular and gradual increase from the lowest to the highest degree of perfection? If the natural world and the things therein contained, as we have already stated, are figurative of spiritual things, it must appear perfectly consistent; and that it is so in reality, the experience of every truly spiritual man and woman can bear witness. The scriptures are also sufficiently plain and explicit on this subject. David, under the influence of Divine inspiration, says, "The "righteous shall flourish like a palm tree; he shall grow like a "cedar in Lebanon."* So also the prophet Malachi; "But "unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise "with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth and grow up as "calves of the stall."† The prophet Isaiah, in his prediction concerning the coming of Christ, says, "Of the increase of his govern-

* Psa. xcii. 12. † Mal. iv. 2.

ment and peace there shall be no end."* Here is an express declaration of an endless increase.

As the work of God, in the formation of the natural creation, was a progressive, increasing work; so all the works of his providence and grace on earth, among his chosen people, have been attended with a progressive increase from one dispensation to another; and the preceding has ever been preparatory to that which followed; and all have been designed and calculated to show forth in a figure the great and last dispensation of God's grace, in which his spiritual Kingdom is to supersede all other kingdoms in power and majesty, and whose increasing glory, purity, peace and righteousness will endure forever.

From the fall of man to Abraham, the only law revealed to man for his protection, was the law of nature. This law was plain and obvious; and all who kept it, found justification before God, according to the work of the day in which they lived. To this the apostle Paul had reference in his epistle to the Romans, where he says; "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by "nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, "are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law "written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, "and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one "another."† Hence in every age, those who had no other law, were required to keep this. And as there was no other law given to any people before Abraham, therefore all were bound by it; and whoever violated it, must necessarily fall under condemnation.

This law of nature dictated that man should not violate the order of nature; that is, he should not commit any kind of violence or injustice against any of his fellow men; that he should not murder, nor defraud his fellow creatures, nor injure them in any way or manner whatever. It also taught that he should not violate the times and seasons of nature, in any manner: for the law of nature has its regular order, which the natural man could not violate with impunity. These things were plain to the understandings of men in a state of nature who had never received a superior law, nor been so far corrupted by the influence of the spirit of evil, as to lose the knowledge of moral good.

Man in a state of nature, and under the influence of this law, would not plant nor sow the seeds of the earth out of season; nor would he even generate his own offspring out of season. In short, he would not perform any duty out of season, nor neglect any in season. Instead of remaining idle, he would perform the duties of the day while the day lasted, and take his rest at night; and therein he would be able to find justification and peace, and live to God's acceptance according to that order. But whenever he began to

* Isa. ix. 7. † Rom. ii. 14, 15.

hearken to the influences of evil, a train of disorderly sensations began to spring up in his mind; and he was then led to violate the order of nature which had before been his protection; hence followed a successive train of evils.

Adam, before his fall, in addition to the law of nature, had the express command of God as an additional protection. This he violated; and his first transgression was that which struck at the very order in which his offspring were to be propagated: so that, instead of producing an offspring subservient to the order of nature, he generated one which soon began to show from whence originated his disorderly and unnatural conduct. By the first fruit of Adam's transgression the first murder was committed; and henceforth those of his posterity who readily followed his example, began to corrupt themselves with wickedness: so that long before the flood, wickedness greatly abounded among them; "and the earth was filled with violence." And so few were there who kept the law of nature and refrained from acts of violence, that at last none were found worthy of God's protection, except Noah and his family.

"Noah was a just man." Instead of violating the order of nature, and corrupting his seed by inordinate affections, "he walked with God," and begat no children till he was five hundred years old; and even then, instead of being led by the corrupt inclinations of a fallen nature, he went forth by the permission of God, according to the law of nature: for it is said, "he was perfect in his generations."* In obedience to the command of God, Noah built an ark to save himself and his family from the flood; and did all that was commanded him to do. Thus "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord," *by his obedience*, and was preserved from the flood of waters which swept off the rebellious children of violence.

After the flood a new generation of men began to multiply upon earth, who, instead of following the righteous example of Noah, chose rather to follow the influences of the power of evil, and soon corrupted themselves with lust and pride, which increased among them till the building of Babel, when God confounded their language, and scattered them over the face of the earth.

But God having respect to the work of his own hands, always preserved a chosen seed to bear testimony against the violations of the law of nature, to support the belief of one invisible, everliving and true God, and to maintain the line of distinction between good and evil, obedience and disobedience, until the coming of the promised Messiah, who was to commence the work of redemption,

* By this he condemned the world, who were led wholly by the corrupt inclinations of a fallen nature, "and took them wives of all which they chose, and went in unto them," not according to the law of nature, nor according to the appointment of God, but through the influence of their own lusts.

and effect the salvation of all who were willing to become his true and faithful followers. But this great salvation could not be effected at once; it must be brought to pass through the progressive operations of Divine Providence, which were designed and wisely calculated to enlighten the minds of mankind, and gradually prepare their understandings for such an event; and ages must pass away before it could be fully accomplished.

This line of distinction between good and evil, between the sons of violence, and that chosen seed by whom the testimony of the true God was to be preserved in the earth, necessarily required a cross against that fallen nature from which disorder and violence always proceeded. Hence the first manifestation of God to man, after the fall, from which proceeded a law enjoining an external and practical cross upon that nature, was made to Abram. He was first called to forsake his country and his kindred, and received the promise of a blessing as the consequence of obedience. This was a striking figure of the requirement and promises of God under the gospel dispensation. Here was a cross required of Abram before he could receive the promised blessing, or even be entitled to the covenant of promise. This was doubtless a cross against the feelings of his nature, which would have inclined him to cleave to his native land and his father's house. But he took up his cross and obeyed the call of God; and, for so doing, he was blessed, from time to time, with still greater manifestations of the notice and favor of God.

After this, God made a covenant with Abram; and after changing his name from Abram to Abraham, and renewing his promises with many additional circumstances, God required him, as a token or seal of the covenant of promise, to circumcise the males of his family. Here was established the first outward sign of a practical cross against the fallen nature of the flesh; and here let it be remembered, that this first permanent cross which God required of his people, was one which pointed directly to the very nature and foundation of man's loss from God.

Abraham being found faithful to obey the commands of God thus far, and to keep the law of circumcision, God, according to his promise, blessed him with a son in his old age. And here it is worthy of remark, that this child of promise was not generated according to the will of the flesh, in the days of his youth; for the inordinate propensity of carnal gratification could claim no share in the promise of God; but that it might be made manifest that the promised seed could not be begotten according to the will of the flesh, Abraham and Sarah were both advanced in years; "and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women." Hence this child was given to be Abraham's heir in the line of the promise; and from him was to issue, in the line of succession,

that promised seed in which all the families of the earth were to be blessed.

God having noticed Abraham's faithfulness thus far, determined to make a final proof of his faith and obedience, and to give him an opportunity of showing himself worthy of the confidence placed in him, and of the honorable station to which he was appointed, as the typical father of the faithful, and the legitimate progenitor of that peculiar people who were to typify the chosen followers of Christ, the Lord from Heaven, the Father of the *new creation*, and the faithful Redeemer of his people. Accordingly God commanded Abraham to take his only son Isaac, whom he loved, and offer him for a burnt-offering.

Abraham was now undoubtedly brought to the greatest extremity of trial. Here was evidently a greater cross required of him, than that which was required of Adam at the beginning. But Abraham did not stop to query with God, how he would fulfil his promise if Isaac should be sacrificed; he did not plead his great affections for his beloved son; he did not dispute the present command of God, as being contradictory to his former promise; he did not object to it as an act of murder, and urge the word of God to Noah; "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood "be shed." Nay; instead of urging these objections as insurmountable against the fulfilment of the promise of God, (as many at the present day, urge the necessity of the old command to *increase and multiply*, in order to prevent the world from coming to an end,) Abraham immediately went forth in obedience to the command of God, and made all the necessary preparations to accomplish the solemn and awful task. And having proceeded far enough to prove his faith and obedience, he was released from the dreadful sacrifice, with the blessing of God, and was ever after honored as the friend of God.

In these displays of the will of God to Abraham, was laid the foundation of all the most important types and figures under the law, and of all the succeeding dispensations of God to man. The law of circumcision was the first visible sign which pointed to the destruction of the root of sin. And the offering up of Isaac was a prelude to all those ceremonial sacrifices under the law, which had a special reference to the great sacrifice of the Son of God, and to the final sacrifice, in his followers, of all the ties and beloved objects of nature. The posterity of Abraham, in the line of the promise, were henceforth greatly distinguished from all other people, by the peculiar notice and favor of God.

After the children of Israel, the promised seed of Abraham, were released from their Egyptian bondage by Moses, (an eminent type of the deliverance of God's people from the bondage of sin by Jesus Christ,) they received the law of God from Mount Sinai,

which brought with it an additional cross against the fallen nature of man, and was a further manifestation of God against those carnal and sensual indulgences in which the generality of mankind lived. Here the work of God was attended with an increasing testimony against sin, and additional restraints upon the gratifications of the flesh.

Hence those chosen people were still further separated from the rest of mankind by their obedience. And such was the strictness and purity of the divine law, that those who violated it were cut off from among the children of Israel, by the penalties of the law and the righteous judgments of God. And tho they were still under the vail of the flesh, and still allowed to increase and multiply in the order of natural generation; yet the restrictions of the law were such that they could not violate the order of nature with impunity.* Therefore, those who lived under the law found a much greater cross against the carnal indulgences of nature than had ever been required before. And henceforth, while the Israelites continued faithful in their obedience to the law, they were more noticed of God than any other people on earth, and were more highly distinguished by temporal blessings and divine manifestations. These blessings and privileges were the fruits of the cross which they bore, and by which all who were truly faithful, were justified according to the measure of the work of God in that day, and rested in hope of the promised redemption in Christ, when he should appear.

The law and the prophets continued until John, who was the forerunner of Christ, and came to bear witness of him. John came with a sharp and powerful testimony against sin, and preached the baptism of water unto repentance; saying, "Repent ye: "for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." And again; "I indeed "baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh "after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to "bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: "whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, "and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the "chaff with unquenchable fire."†

All who heard the testimony of John, and were willing to obey it, began to prepare themselves for the coming of Christ and his Kingdom, by taking the first step which John's testimony required:

* This subject is clearly illustrated in *The Testimony of Christ's Second Appearing*, in the chapter entitled, "The true end and design of the law given by Moses," where it may be seen what restrictions were laid upon the works of generation under the law; and what purifications were required of those who lived in those works, before they could be accepted of God, and admitted to the sanctuary. See also Levit. chap. xii. and xv.

† Matt. iii. 2, 11, 12.

and that was, to confess their sins, and be baptized with water unto repentance. "Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, "and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized of him "in Jordan, confessing their sins." The ministration of John was a necessary prelude to that of Jesus Christ; and his baptism was a figure of the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire. As the baptizing or washing with water, as practiced in that day, will cleanse the body from outward pollution; so the fire of the Holy Spirit will cleanse the soul from sin, and burn up and destroy that fallen and corrupted nature in man which is the operating cause of all iniquity. Hence it is evident that John's baptism was a type of, and a prelude to that of Jesus Christ: and John himself also testified, saying, "He must increase, but I must decrease."*

The way being sufficiently prepared by John's ministration, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was ushered into the world, to be the head of the new and spiritual creation of God, and the Savior and Redeemer of his people. He was begotten, not in the order of natural generation, by the will of man, but by the power of God. "He was made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but "after the power of an endless life."† Born of a virgin, whose chastity had never been contaminated by any lawless act, he became *the end of the law for righteousness* to all who believe and obey him.‡ To such therefore, the law was no longer necessary to curb the licentious passions of human nature: for those who received and obeyed his testimony, found it a far more powerful restraint upon the carnal propensities of man's fallen nature, than the law of Moses ever had been.

Those therefore who obeyed the gospel, were free from the law; because the gospel, by fulfilling the real spirit and design of the law, superseded its outward ceremonies, and rendered them useless. Not that believers were now left at liberty to indulge themselves in all those carnal gratifications of the flesh which were forbidden by the law; but that the purity of the gospel was such as to supersede the necessity of the law, by saving all who obeyed it, from those filthy pollutions which were kept within certain limits by the law, but could not be subdued by it.

The object of Christ's first manifestation was to lay the foundation of salvation by the cross; to take upon himself human nature; to crucify that nature, and to suffer in the flesh and die to a sinful nature in the person of Jesus, and rise to God, that he might, by his sufferings, death and resurrection, be able to open the new and living way of eternal life to his followers; that he might thereby become the first-begotten of God, and firstborn from the dead.

Having entered upon his ministry, he commenced a new and spiritual work, and began to reveal the real nature and substance

* John iii 30. † Heb. vii. 16. ‡ Rom. x. 4.

of the law of God, and showed what it required of man; that it taught mankind to love God with all the heart and soul, and their neighbors as themselves; that this was the real spirit of the law and the prophets; and the object of his mission was to fulfil this law himself, and teach all his followers to do the same.

To accomplish this great object, he introduced the most pure and simple system of morality, and taught that all disorder and every kind of violence must be done away; that the true spirit of the gospel was, *Peace on earth and good will to man;* and that nothing contrary to this pure spirit could find an entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven. "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."* He also taught that nothing short of this spirit of purity and holiness could ever overcome the nature of sin, or destroy the deplorable effects of the fall in the soul of man; that this overcoming power could be gained only by self-denial and the cross; and that there was no other way to find salvation and redemption. "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."† Again; "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple."‡

Under the ministration of Jesus Christ, we find a far greater increase of the work of God than had ever taken place on earth since the fall of man. In this increase was manifested a cross against the carnal nature of man proportionably great; far greater indeed than had ever before been required of man; a cross against all the corruptions of man's fallen nature. This, of course, created an opposition against the testimony of Jesus, from the unbelieving Jews, which betrayed their darkness, blindness and ignorance of the real nature of the law; and clearly manifested their hypocrisy in pretending to keep it, by observing some of its outward ceremonies, while in their hearts they were enemies to God. This opposition from these unbelieving hypocrites, against the Lord Jesus Christ, was carried to such an extremity of persecution, that he finally gave up his natural life to his persecutors, and suffered the painful and ignominlous death of the cross.

The ministration of Jesus Christ opened a new era to the world. It taught mankind what they had never known before; that the real work of God was not to build up the kingdom of this world, and to render the earth a durable habitation for man; but to prepare them for an eternal and immortal state beyond the grave. It taught them that the dispensation of the law and the prophets came short of the power of salvation from sin; that it could never "make the comers thereunto perfect;" and that the work of those dispensations was but preparatory to that great and important

* Matt. v. 20. see also chap. xviii. 3. † Mark viii. 34. ‡ Luke xiv. 27.

work which was to redeem mankind from the fallen nature of the flesh, and fit them for the Kingdom of Heaven. Hence the words of Jesus; "Among them that are born of women, there hath not "risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, he that "is least in the Kingdom of Heaven, is greater than he."* This is an evident proof that John himself was not in the Kingdom of Heaven, and that none before him had ever entered it. The Kingdom of Heaven, therefore, which John declared to be at hand, and for which he was sent to prepare the way, was first revealed by Jesus Christ, as a state to which all the former dispensations of God to man, were but as types and shadows, and preparatory events.

But the revelation of Jesus Christ in the flesh, was but the commencement of this great and glorious work. He was *the beginning of the new creation of God.* He came to open the way of salvation from sin; to declare himself "the way, and the truth, and the life," and set an example of righteousness to mankind; and to show what his followers must be, in order to inherit a place in his Kingdom. And all who believed on him and received his testimony in that day, became "a kind of firstfruits" of his Kingdom.

Jesus Christ having finished his personal work on earth, and ascended to his Father; and having, through the agency of the Holy Spirit, established the primitive church, which was to serve as a pattern of the true order of his church in the latter day, his Spirit was, by degrees, withdrawn from the earth, to establish the heavenly order of his Kingdom in the world of spirits. This was agreeable to what he had spoken to his disciples before his crucifixion: "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were "not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and "receive you unto myself; that where I am there ye may be also."† Hence the work of Christ, after the establishment of the primitive church, and before he could make his second appearance on earth, was to prepare and set in order those heavenly mansions for the reception of those faithful souls who, through the work of the regeneration, should finally be found prepared to inherit them.

In the mean time Antichrist rose, and began to infuse his spirit into the members of the christian church, and by artfully disguising his false doctrines with sacred names, he so far succeeded as to undermine the primitive church, and establish his kingdom upon the ruins thereof. In process of time he filled the world with his dark and benighted systems of religion, and, for sacred truth, established many corrupt and pernicious principles which were continually at variance with christian purity. By these means he filled

† John xiv. 2, 3.

the earth with corruption, religious persecution, blood and fire; and maintained his deplorable reign for the space of twelve hundred and sixty years.

During this long and gloomy reign of Antichrist, the only true spiritual work of God on earth, by which he revealed his will to man, was intrusted to chosen witnesses, who bore testimony to the purity of the primitive church, and condemned the depravity of the times, and the corruptions of those false churches which had assumed the name and authority of Christ. This period was indeed a gloomy night of darkness; but these witnesses, like stars in the night, often broke through the gloom and gave a glimmering light to honest souls. These witnesses prophesied of the coming of Christ's Kingdom, and the great increase of the work of God in the latter day. And altho amidst the universal gloom which prevailed, all appearances seemed far distant; yet there was still an increasing work in the world of spirits, by which a foundation was gradually preparing for a more extraordinary increase of the spiritual work of God on earth, than had ever taken place since the foundation of the world.

But the day of full redemption was yet to come; the real and effectual work of which could not be accomplished but through the travel of the regeneration only; and this spiritual travel could not fully take place till the way was prepared for it. When the appointed time arrived, the way was opened, and this long predicted day was ushered into the world; and that work which was designed to establish the Kingdom of Christ on earth, and effect the final regeneration of souls, then commenced in very deed. Here began a new and important manifestation of Divine goodness; the great and last display of God's grace to a lost world, which superseded all former dispensations, to which they were all but preparatory events, and in which all the types and shadows, and prophetic signs of the law and the prophets, concerning the day of redemption, began to be eminently fulfilled.

The important period having arrived, the work of this great millennial day has now commenced, and is yet in its beginning; but it is an increasing work. The Kingdom of Christ is now established on earth, and his reign is begun; and henceforth he will rule and reign till all enemies are put under his feet; and, "of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end."

CHAPTER VII.

A few remarks upon the Witnesses of truth, including a brief calculation of prophetic scriptures alluding to the period of Antichrist's reign, and the second coming of Christ.

The declension of the primitive church, and the rise of Antichrist have been briefly alluded to in several places in this work; but our limits will not permit us to enter fully into the discussion of these subjects. We shall, however, make a few remarks concerning those witnesses whom God raised up and sent forth, from time to time, to bear testimony of the truth to mankind; and in doing this, we shall also examine the prophetic periods, and the true import of some passages of scripture which allude to the time of Antichrist's reign, and the second appearing of Christ.

Those who suppose that God has always had a true church on earth, ever since the first appearing of Christ, and who expect to find the order and power of the primitive church solely by the revelation given in that day, will, in the event, most certainly be disappointed. It appears evident from the predictions of Jesus Christ and his apostles, that they foresaw a time coming when the order and power of the church would be lost from off the face of the earth; and therefore could not be known nor found by any people whatever. Jesus testified to his disciples, saying, "The "days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of "the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.—Then if any man shall "say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.—Take "heed that ye be not deceived: for many will come in my name, "saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not "therefore after them."*

These testimonies of the Lord Jesus evidently alluded to the time of Antichrist's dominion; and if Christ had any true church on earth, at that time, he must certainly have been in it; because his church is his body in which he dwells, and of which he is the head and life. Those therefore, who are the real members of that body, can say in truth, "Christ is our life." Hence they can say truly, "Lo, here is Christ!" and such might be followed with the greatest propriety. "Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ;" saith the apostle.† But if there ever was a time on earth when none could say in truth, "Lo, here is Christ;" and consequently none could depend upon such a testimony; then it is certain that Christ had not, at that time, any true church on earth. Again: St. Paul saith, "Let no man deceive you by any means: "for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away "first, and that man of sin be revealed."‡ This is a clear proof that the apostle foresaw that the church would fall away, and that

* Matt. xxiv. 23.—Luke xvii. 22. and xxi. 8. † 1 Cor. xi. 1. ‡ 2 Thess. ii. 3.

Antichrist would have his reign, before the day of Christ's second coming.

It has been generally admitted that there was a falling away, and that Antichrist has had his reign; but that Christ had no true church on earth during that period, will hardly be acknowledged by any of the churches of Antichrist; because such an acknowledgment would implicitly condemn all these churches as counterfeits. "But the tree is known by its fruits." And certain it is, that if the predictions of Christ, on this subject, have ever been fulfilled, then there was a time when he had no true church on earth. This period may easily be ascertained by an impartial examination of ecclesiastical history, which developes ages of controversy and strife, fraud and violence, tyranny and persecution, war and bloodshed, licentiousness and debauchery, and every species of crime, committed under the authority and by the sanction of these professedly christian churches, and which sufficiently prove that Christ was not there.

Many attempts have been made under the reign of antichristian darkness, to ascertain the true meaning of those prophetic numbers given by Divine inspiration, respecting the rise and duration of Antichrist's power, and the prophecy of the "two witnesses." But the nature of these events being concealed from the view of man, those who have attempted to make the calculation, were unable to discern "those times and seasons which God had put in his own power:" and hence they have always failed in their attempts. Even the prophet Daniel himself was unable to comprehend the nature and event of those things which were represented to him in the vision. This appears evident from his own testimony.

"And I heard, but I understood not: then said I, O my Lord, "what shall be the end of these things? And he said, Go thy way "Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of "the end. Many shall be purified and made white, and tried; "but the wicked shall do wickedly; and none of the wicked shall "understand; but the wise shall understand.—But go thou thy "way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at "the end of the days."*

Thus it appears that these things were "closed up and sealed till the time of the end." It was therefore impossible that the predictions relating to these events, should be understood, as to their nature and substance, or the period of their accomplishment, till the time of God's appointment; and even then, they could be known only by the revelation of God. When the seals were taken off, and the book of Divine Revelation was opened, then these predictions which were delivered to the prophet Daniel, and

* Dan. xii. 8, 9, 10 & 13.

afterwards renewed by Jesus Christ, and again confirmed by the angel to John, could be clearly seen and understood, but not before. And it is but reasonable to suppose that this revelation would first be made to those who were in the real work of God, and whose minds were enlightened by the Divine manifestations which succeeded these events. These things having now been revealed by the light of Divine Truth, and the events clearly seen and understood, they may be pointed out and illustrated, agreeable to ancient predictions, and confirmed by the events recorded in history.

Tho the spirit of Antichrist began to manifest itself in the apostle's days, as appears evident from their writings; yet it was many years before it gained so much ascendency as to exclude the true and faithful witnesses of God and followers of Christ from the sanctuary. When this was effectually done, then the disciples of Antichrist, with great zeal, set about modelling the precepts and doctrines of Jesus Christ and his apostles to suit their own carnal views. And as the practical doctrines of the cross of self-denial were the most obnoxious to the spirit of Antichrist, the first object was to pervert these doctrines in such a manner as to render the cross of Christ ineffectual.

This was done by substituting the form of a wooden cross in the place of practical self-denial, and making the show of religion supply the place of the reality. Hence when the Emperor Constantine assumed the christian name, he formed such a cross for his standard, under which he prosecuted his bloody wars, and fought his way to the throne. Similar devices were formed to supplant every thing that bore the mark of christian purity and simplicity, till the views of Antichrist were fully accomplished, and the sanctuary itself, with every thing belonging to it, was completely trodden under foot.

As this was a gradual work, it was not fully affected until the period when *Pope Leo the first* came into full possession of his unlimited power, about the year 457. This was the year in which the emperor *Marcianus* died, and left *Leo* in the full possession of his power and supremacy, both civil and ecclesiastical; so that henceforth he was under the control of no power on earth, neither civil nor ecclesiastical, but ruled both church and state, as it is called, with unlimited sway. And from this time, the power of the Popes of Rome was fully established above the power of all earthly princes; and by their authority laws were framed, and creeds drawn up and established, to regulate and govern the religious faith of the whole christian world, so called, as far as their dominion extended. The scenes of tyranny and persecution which followed, to enforce obedience to their bloody religion, fully mark this gloomy period as the days of desolation, and the intolerant reign of Antichrist.

Hence it appears that the year 457 was the period in which the unlimited reign of Antichrist fully commenced. The closing period of this reign is pointed out in the visions of the prophet Daniel, and by reckoning from the date of the vision, may easily be found. The question was asked, "How long shall be the "vision concerning the daily sacrifice, and the transgression of "desolation, to give both the sanctuary and the host to be trodden "under foot? And he said unto me, Unto two thousand and three "hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."* This vision is dated 553 years before Christ; and allowing 2300 prophetic days to signify so many years, which is generally admitted, we have the time from the date of the prophecy to the cleansing of the sanctuary. Then by taking 553 from 2300 leaves 1747 for the year of the christian era when the cleansing of the sanctuary was to commence, and when the testimony of truth and all sacred things were no longer to be trodden under foot by the unlimited dominion and persecuting power of Antichrist.

Again: The duration of this reign of Antichrist is given in another vision, and which also confirms the preceding calculation. "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, "and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be "a thousand two hundred and ninety days." These are with propriety called the days of desolation, being the period in which the true church of Christ, or sanctuary of God, was trodden under foot. These days, like the former, signify so many years. Then by adding these 1290 years of desolation to 457, (the year of their commencement under Pope Leo, as before stated,) we have 1747 for the year in which these days of desolation were to end. This agrees exactly with the former calculation, and each one confirms the other.

In the Revelations of John we find the following testimony: "And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the Angel "stood, saying, Rise and measure the temple of God, and the "altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is "without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given "unto the Gentiles; and the holy city shall they tread under foot "forty and two months.† And I will give power unto my two "witnesses, and they shall prophecy a thousand two hundred and "threescore days, clothed in sackcloth."‡ This measuring had reference to the period of time in which that order of primitive christians existed who worshipped God in the inner court of the temple, or in other words, who rejected the works of the flesh,

*Dan. viii 13, 14.

†This revelation could not allude to the Jewish temple, except as a figure: for both the city and its temple were destroyed about 25 years before the revelation was given: it evidently alluded to the primitive church, which was the spiritual temple of God.

‡Rev. xi 1, 2, 3.

and worshipped God in the spirit, and separated themselves from the course and friendship of the world.

But the question will naturally arise, Who were these *two witnesses?* and for what purpose were they sent? As our limits will not permit us to enter fully into the discussion of this subject, our remarks must be brief.

During the long reign of antichristian darkness, God always had his faithful witnesses, through whom he dispensed a sufficient portion of light to preserve the world from total darkness and ruin. Many such were raised up, from time to time, to whom God revealed himself by his Spirit, who always bore testimony against sin, and in whom was the only divine light then manifested on the earth. They were called the *two witnesses*, because they were chosen from the two sexes, male and female, and because their testimony pointed to the two great dispensations of the gospel, the first and second appearing of Christ. They were to prophesy 1260 years (in prophetic language called *days*) "clothed in sackcloth." This denotes the duration of their testimony under a state of darkness and mourning. And this is an evidence that Christ could not have been with them during that period: for his presence would have dispelled all darkness and mourning from them. "Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them?"

The testimony of these witnesses commenced at the treading down of the holy city, by the Gentiles, under the dominion of Antichrist. These gentiles having obtained full possession of the outer court of the spiritual temple of God, the way into the temple was shut; of course there could be no entrance into the holy place. While the primitive church stood in its purity, it constituted the living temple of God, where souls could find an entrance into the sanctuary of holiness, and offer their spiritual sacrifices upon the holy altar.

But when this church fell away, and came under the dominion of Antichrist, then the spirit of the world in the fallen nature of man, (called by the angel *the Gentiles*,) under the government of Antichrist, took full possession of every thing that belonged to the church, which was called the *holy city*, and corrupted and trod it under foot. But the spirit of holiness, and the true spiritual order of the church were shut from them, and were henceforth inaccessible to man. Therefore, during the reign of Antichrist, there could be no true church of Christ on earth: for if such a church had then existed, that church would have been the true temple of God, and man could have had access to it.

When that measure was fulfilled by which the temple and the altar were measured, according to the direction of the angel, then was fulfilled the vision of Daniel the prophet: "I beheld, and the

"same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them, "until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the "saints of the Most High."* As the saints, or true worshippers of God, were excluded from the temple and the altar during the reign of Antichrist; so these two witnesses prophesied, "clothed in sackcloth." during that period. And as the temple was shut, and the true sanctuary trodden under foot; so there was no light of God on earth except in these witnesses; and wherever they appeared and bore testimony against the corruptions of a false church, and the bloody religion of a degenerate world, they were followed by the cruel arm of persecution, and all the power of this beastly hierarchy was exerted to exterminate them from off the face of the earth. These witnesses continued to rise, from time to time, in the power of their divine testimony, and were as continually opposed and oppressed by the power of persecution, during the whole period of Antichrist's reign.

The testimony of these witnesses pointed both to the first and second appearing of Christ. They bore testimony to the precepts and example of Jesus Christ, and to the purity of primitive christianity; and plainly testified against the doctrines of Antichrist, the religion of the times, and the degeneracy of the world. They also foretold the second coming of Christ, and what it would effect; that all false religion, pride and hypocrisy, all tyranny and persecutions, wars and fightings, and all manner of wickedness, and every kind of corruption must then be done away; that there should be one fold, and one shepherd. Altho these witnesses of God were raised up in different ages and nations, and bore testimony against the particular corruptions of the age and nation in which they lived; yet the real spirit of their testimony, while they kept in the truth, was uniformly the same, and pointed more or less to the first and second appearing of Christ.

The testimony of these witnesses has ever been opposed and rejected by the established ecclesiastical orders, and the popular religions of the day, who have generally stigmatized them with the name of heretics, fanatics and enthusiasts. And by the authority of these self-styled orthodox churches, they have often suffered severely under the iron hand of persecution. Many thousands, yea, millions of them in different ages, have laid down their lives for their testimony, being sacrificed to the vengeance of those who claimed authority to dictate religious principles to all others, and who never failed to bend these principles to their own corrupt standard.

These witnesses were the stars of the spiritual heavens; for they were indeed the only spiritual lights that were seen upon earth in this gloomy night of Antichristian darkness. These were the

* Dan. vii 21, 22.

stars that were cast down by the "little horn, which waxed ex-
"ceeding great, even to the host of heaven, and cast down some
"of the host of the stars to the ground, and stamped upon them."*
When they had finished their testimony, "the beast made war
"against them, and overcame them, and killed them."† Yet
while they stood faithful in the truth, and faithfully delivered their
testimony, they could not be overcome. But they were never
commissioned of God to build up and establish themselves in the
order of a church: for the true order and power of the church
was lost from the earth, and they had not light and power given
them to restore it. This work could not be effected till Christ
made his second appearance, to cleanse the sanctuary, and build
up the second gospel temple.

The true order and power of the Church of Christ on earth, was
first given by divine revelation, and being trodden down and lost
by the power of Antichrist, it could never be restored without a
second revelation as great, at least, as the former. Therefore,
whenever these witnesses undertook to build themselves up into a
church, or to restore the true foundation of the primitive church,
they always failed in their undertaking, and built more or less
upon the principles which Antichrist had already established.
By these means they gradually fell into union with the standing
order of professors, and they and their natural successors were
finally tolerated as christian churches. Hence they soon lost the
spirit and substance of their testimony, and by degrees became one
with the world. Thus the beast (which signifies the fallen nature
of man) overcame them, and killed them: for the arm of persecu-
tion, which could only destroy their bodies, could never suppress
their testimony. But when they united with the world, they lost
their testimony, which was the life of their souls, and then they
were conquered, and then the world could rejoice over them.

Hence the churches which were formed by these people, after
the closing of their testimony, were but dead bodies, standing on
the same foundation with that great christian hierarchy which gov-
erned the world under the sacred name of the church of Christ.
In this manner many of these stars fell to the earth, one after
another, through the whole reign of Antichrist, and thus formed
dead bodies. Hence the origin of many of those false churches
which still exist under the christian name; and hence the dominion
of Antichrist was still supported, tho under various names and
denominations.

The first effectual blow that weakened the power of Antichrist
and paved the way for the destruction of his tyrannical govern-
ment, was that memorable division in his kingdom called *The
Reformation.* Tho this did not alter the nature of his subjects

* See Dan. viii. 9, 10. † See Rev xi. 7.

nor restore the power of salvation; yet it opened the way for many other divisions, and began to excite a free investigation of their religious principles, and to unfetter the mind of man from the principles of superstition and bigotry. By these means the kingdom of Antichrist has been gradually growing weaker to this day. His power of persecuting by legal authority, has been lost for some time; and the total destruction of his kingdom will finally be effected by the same means.

Thus, in the course of Divine Providence, the very materials which have weakened the power of Antichrist, and which will finally destroy his kingdom, have originated in that very kingdom. For altho the true witnesses of God have, in all ages, declared in favor of religious liberty, and against the tyrannical usurpation of Antichrist over the consciences of men; yet it remained for that usurpation to be destroyed by those divisions which sprung up among his own subjects. The powerful influence of those liberal principles, which prevailed in the minds of many discerning and liberal men, produced a change in public sentiment, in the very heart of Antichrist's kingdom, which could not be effected by foreign opposition.

Many philosophers and men of enlightened understandings appeared in the seventeenth century, and have continued to increase to the present day, who by the powerful influence of their writings, and the concurrent circumstances of the times, contributed to disseminate the principles of civil and religious liberty to a very great extent. These influential writers contended, with great zeal, for the rights of man, and the liberty of conscience, against arbitrary power, and all kinds of tyranny, both civil and ecclesiastical; and through their exertions, liberty of conscience greatly prevailed, even in those countries which had been the most noted for religious intolerance. But these efforts in favor of religious toleration, were always opposed by the great body of ecclesiastics, in all countries; and such have generally been the last to yield to the just and equitable principles of religious liberty.

Notwithstanding the great opposition which had long prevailed in the church of Antichrist, against the general principles of liberty, and especially against religious liberty; yet much light prevailed on these subjects during the 17th century, and liberal sentiments gained so much ground towards the close of that century, that the catholic hierarchy lost much of its power and influence. In the year 1689, liberty of conscience was proclaimed in England, by WILLIAM, *Prince of Orange*, who succeeded, in a great measure, in establishing it. This event, and the subject of religious toleration, excited great attention in Europe, and prepared the way for the further increase of these principles. The civil powers of the earth soon began to assume their natural rights, of which they had

long been deprived by ecclesiastical supremacy; and, in their turn, they soon began to deprive this great *christian hierarchy* of the power of persecution, and to establish the rights of conscience. Here it may with propriety be said, that the earth began to open and to swallow up "the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth." And in this manner the earth has continued to swallow up the flood of the dragon to this day.

The *two witnesses* were to prophecy 1260 days, "clothed in sackcloth." This period commenced in the year 457, when Antichrist attained his unlimited power, as before stated. By adding 1260 to 457, we have 1717 for the close of that period in which the witnesses were to remain under sackcloth, or in a state of darkness and mourning. About this period, through the operations of Divine Providence, the power of persecution had so far declined, and the rising witnesses had gained so much light and understanding of the true nature of christianity, and had received such bright views of the second coming of Christ, and of the nearness of their redemption, that they began to lift up their heads and rejoice, and could no longer be considered as under sackcloth.

About this time, the emperor of Russia, called *Peter the Great*, established a plenary liberty of conscience throughout that extensive empire. And tho that nation, to their honor, had been the most free from religious persecution, perhaps, of any nation in the civilized world; yet the established church, previous to this period, had possessed great authority, in ecclesiastical matters, over the minds of the people. But the full and free exercise of religious liberty, and the freedom of civil rights granted by that Prince, opened the way for a great increase of light and understanding among his numerous subjects. This liberal act from a prince who was reputed so wise and powerful, had great influence upon the neighboring nations, in leading them to establish the same liberty, and was probably as great an incentive towards promoting the civil and religious rights of man as any act of any government whatever. The Emperor's final edict, which completed what he had been twenty years in performing, was dated January 1721.*

From this period the principles of civil and religious rights and liberty of conscience continued to gain ground, especially in England and other parts of Europe; so that about the year 1735, there remained no power in the civil government to persecute unto death any people for their religious principles. Nor had the priesthood of the established churches any legal authority to hinder these witnesses from the free exercise of their religious faith, or to prevent the declaration of their testimony to the people.†

Since this time many bright witnesses have continued to rise,

* See history of Peter the Great.

† It is true they often assumed that authority under the pretence of suppressing disorder; but this was only a mask under which they vented the malignant spirit of Antichrist.

and religious revivals have greatly increased. Those who under the reign of persecution, were branded with the odious name of *heretics*, *wild fanatics*, and *enthusiasts*, were now distinguished by the milder appellation of *dissenters*, *puritans*, and *new-lights*. They were ardent in their expectations of the second coming of Christ; and often testified, by the spirit of prophecy, that it was near at hand. These things were evidently preparatory to the great work of the millennium; and the concurrence of events seem to point out this period (1735) for the expiration of the "forty and two months," in which the holy city was trodden down by the Gentiles.

It ought to be particularly noticed that the 42 months, and the 1260 days, point to two different events, both commencing at the same time. The 42 months allude to the time in which the holy city was trodden under foot of the Gentiles; the 1260 days allude to the time in which the witnesses prophesied under sackcloth. As these two numbers are differently expressed, and were evidently designed to mark the period of two important events, they ought to be calculated accordingly. In 42 months, or three years and a half, there are 1278 days. These days, in prophetic language, signify so many years. As before stated, the period of treading down the holy city commenced in the year 457. Then by adding 1278 to 457 we have 1735. This appears to be about the closing period of Antichrist's tyrannical reign.*

Liberty of conscience was a remarkable display of the providence of God in favor of the witnesses of truth. At this time the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood up on their feet. In obedience to the voice of eternal truth which called them, they rose up, in the life and power of their testimony, above the power of antichristian tyranny and all its corrupt principles and doctrines. But from the time that these witnesses began to rise, it was a number of years before they could gain real possession of the holy city. Antichrist and the Gentiles still had possession there. But, having entered upon the primitive ground of the church, they advanced forward, and began to strip off the false covering and deceptive colors and glosses with which the pride and sagacity of the Gentiles, and the deceitful spirit of Antichrist had obscured the pure doctrines of the cross, and the beautiful simplicity of the gospel, and thus restored the daily sacrifice. Then was completed the 1290 days, already noticed, which were to be accomplished before the power of the holy people could cease to be scattered. This brings us to the year 1747, as before calculated; and here began the real cleansing of the sanctuary.

But the cleansing of the sanctuary, after being so long trodden

* It may be noted as a remarkable circumstance, that Ann Lee was born the very next year, viz. 1736.

under foot, and polluted by the abomination of desolation, could not be accomplished at once; it was a work of time. But when it was sufficiently cleansed, then a body was prepared in which the Spirit of Christ could dwell, having had no abiding place on earth during the long reign of Antichrist. Then Christ the Lord descended and took up his abode in his spiritual house; and then was fulfilled the words of the prophet; "And the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple."* Here the seventh trumpet began to sound, and here began the preaching of the everlasting gospel of Christ's second appearing, which will prove a decisive work to all souls: for this is the last trumpet, in which "the mystery of God will be finished."

From about the year 1747, there was a gradual increase of light and understanding in divine things, and of power and victory over the evil nature of sin, among these faithful witnesses, who were now formed into a society, and united together to worship God in the spirit. This increase of divine light and power continued through various changing scenes, till the establishment of the Millennial Church, or second gospel temple, in the year 1792, which then became the habitation of souls in true gospel order. Then expired the days of waiting spoken of by the prophet Daniel: "Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hun-"dred and five and thirty days." These 1335 days added to 457 make 1792. In this year the church was considered as established in its principles of order and government, in which it has continued to increase to the present day.

The Millennial Church being established, and having by a number of years experience, proved its principles and order, and gained a sufficient degree of strength and stability, the testimony began to go forth from the true gospel temple about the year 1800. This brings the work of God down to the full revelation of the great and last display of his grace to fallen man, and comprehends the latest period which is described by the prophet Daniel in a connected chain. "Judgment *is now* given to the saints of the Most High; and the time *is come* that the saints begin to possess the kingdom."† Henceforth to the end, the work will increase until the final separation shall be made between good and evil, and until the full accomplishment of every promise of God ever made to the saints since the foundation of the world.

* See Mal. iii. 1. This could not mean the Jewish temple: for Christ's work being spiritual, his temple must therefore be spiritual, not natural.

† See Dan. vii. 22.

PART V.

The second appearing of Christ.

CHAPTER I.

Various opinions concerning the manner of Christ's second appearing.

It is a prevailing belief among the professors of christianity, that Christ will again appear upon earth, and usher in the latter day of glory. But the opinions concerning that event are, perhaps, as various as the tenets of their faith. This circumstance, tho it may be considered as an argument in favor of the event itself, is a certain proof that they are yet in ignorance respecting the manner in which it is to take place, and the work which is to be accomplished thereby. Of course, when the event comes to be made manifest by the real work of the day, what can be expected but that unbelief, opposition and disappointment will follow as the natural consequences?

It is well known that about the time of Christ's personal appearance in Judea, the Jews were in earnest expectation of the coming of the Messiah, who had been promised, from early ages, by the repeated predictions of their ancient patriarchs and prophets. But concerning the manner of his coming, and the real nature of his work, they were left in the dark; and therefore, like natural men, they put natural constructions on all the prophecies which related to his coming. They expected to see a highly distinguished earthly Prince, from the lineage of their kings, ascend the throne of David, and sway the royal sceptre with superior power and dignity. They firmly believed that they should then be delivered from their bondage to the Romans; that all their temporal enemies would then be subdued and brought into subjection; and that their nation would be exalted to the highest pitch of temporal glory.

But instead of the mighty Prince whom they so confidently expected, they beheld a man of low degree, of obscure birth and parentage, whose appearance was, in their esteem, mean and contemptible, in whom they could see "no form nor comeliness." Instead of conquering armies at his heels, they saw that his followers were those of the lowest order of the people. Instead of magnificent displays of royal authority, his self-denying precepts and examples were in direct opposition to all their ideas and expectations of temporal glory. Instead of proclaiming war and destruction to their enemies, he preached "peace and good-will to man." Instead of revenging their injuries, he forbid them to render evil for evil. Instead of exalting the glory of their nation, he denoun-

eed the utter destruction of their city and temple. And when they were told that this man was the promised Messiah, the king of the Jews, they rejected him with scorn, persecuted him through all their coasts, accused him of blasphemy against God, and of breaking the laws of their country, spoke all manner of evil against him, endeavored to render his name contemptible through the nation, and, as a finishing stroke of malicious envy, they put him to the cruel and ignominious death of the cross, in hopes thereby to put an end to the growing influence of his testimony which they so much dreaded.

Yet after all their endeavors to destroy the increasing reputation of the Savior, to overthrow his testimony, to falsify his predictions and prove him an impostor, they were defeated in their object. The blessed gospel of peace and salvation which he introduced, had a far more extensive increase after his crucifixion than before; his testimony was more fully confirmed, and all his predictions concerning that rebellious nation came fully to pass. Notwithstanding all this, they refused to yield to conviction or stay their enmity. Their wilful and determined opposition to the Savior and to his testimony tended only to increase their hardness of heart, their blindness and unbelief. They still went on to cry down the testimony, and persecute his followers wherever they could find them.

These facts are generally understood and believed at the present day; and, in all probability, the conduct of the Jews is as generally condemned by the professors of christianity. And what shall be said of these same professors of christianity, with the knowledge of all these things before them, if, in the manifestation of Christ's second appearing, they should be found speaking and acting under the influence of the same spirit which actuated the persecuting Jews? Would they believe that while they were praying for Christ's Kingdom to come, they were actually fighting against it? Will they, like the stubborn Jews, obstinately trust in the religion of their fathers, which they have so shamefully dishonored, and still stop their ears and harden their hearts against the increasing light of God? Or will they candidly listen to the voice of reason, and acknowledge the truth?

The Jews believed that God would send them a *Deliverer*, according to his promise. But when he came, they rejected him, because he did not come in the manner which they expected, nor do the work which they expected. So in the present day, the professors of christianity are living in the full belief that Christ will come the second time, according to his promise. And why are they not as likely to be disappointed in the manner of his coming, and the nature of his work, as the Jews were? Do they profess to be favored with the word of God? So did the Jews. Do they

profess faith in the promises of God? So did the Jews. Do they profess to enjoy the blessings of divine light, and to worship the only living and true God, while the heathen nations walk in darkness and bow down to dumb idols? So did the Jews. Do they profess to be a people highly distinguished and chosen of God to support and maintain the only true religion? So did the Jews. Is their claim to that distinction greater than that of the Jews? By no means, as will readily appear by a little examination.

The Jews were the seed of Abraham, to whom the promise was made; and tho they had often rebelled against the God of their fathers, who had called them by his name, and had greatly corrupted the law of Moses, which was given for their protection; yet they strenuously maintained the outward ceremonies of the law; as strenuously, perhaps, as professing christians of the present day do the outward forms of their religion; and doubtless with as good reasons too. For the Jews were not so divided into sects and parties; and the ceremonies of the law were, to them, a lawful inheritance: whereas the professors of the present day have no such specific and pointed authority for their religious ceremonies.

For the want of such authority, or rather for the want of a sufficient portion of that divine Spirit which their antichristian fathers have lost; that Spirit which led the apostles into a knowledge of divine truth, and taught them how to worship God to his acceptance; for the want of that Spirit, the religion of modern professors of christianity has been dividing and subdividing into "names and sects and parties," for many hundreds of years, all professedly founded on the written words of Christ and his apostles. Yet not one among them all is able to say, with certainty, what is the true import of those passages on which they profess to found their contending systems and jarring creeds. Since then, they are so divided in their opinions concerning the religion of Christ's first appearing, which they and their fathers have professed to follow for nearly two thousand years, how can they be expected to agree about the manner and work of his second appearing?

Considering all these circumstances, are they not likely to be more full of unbelief concerning the testimony of his second coming, than the Jews were concerning that of his first coming? The unbelief of the Jews is proverbial. And it is a truth which is confirmed by the experience of all ages, that every renewed manifestation of divine light to a lost world, which has been attended with an increasing degree of the power and testimony of God against the nature of sin, has never failed to meet with opposition from the great body of the high standing professors of religion, who have lived in the day in which the light was given. Is it not then a matter of importance to all who profess the christian religion, and expect to be saved by

it, but who do not believe that Christ has made his second appearance, to beware of rejecting the testimony of those who do believe it, lest they be found fighting against God.

Tho there are many different opinions among mankind concerning the second coming of Christ; yet that which seems most generally to prevail is, that he will appear in person, and literally fulfil those passages of scripture which speak of his "coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." In this however, there appears to be a material difference of sentiment. Many believe that his reign on earth of a thousand years, will be in his personal or bodily presence; while a still greater proportion seem more inclined to think that he will manifest himself by a universal outpouring of his Spirit upon the nations of the earth, by which nearly all the inhabitants of the world will embrace the christian religion, and enjoy a state of universal happiness and prosperity under the spiritual dominion of Christ. This latter opinion appears to have gained considerable ground within a few years.

But it is the prevailing sentiment, if not the general belief, among those who have embraced this opinion, that tho the thousand years' reign of Christ on earth is to be by his Spirit; yet at the end of this period, he will appear in person, for the final judgment and consummation of all things. Thus, in order to answer their own ideas of the exact fulfilment of the scripture prophecies concerning his coming, they have embraced the plan of two appearances yet future; the first in spirit, the second in person.* Hence the thousand years of blessing and prosperity, in which "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," is to constitute the millennial state of the world, or latter day of glory. This appears very plausible; but what comes next?

To render this glorious period the more conformable to human wisdom, it seems that these modern millenarians have calculated to build their millennial paradise upon the old heavens and earth, and to enjoy their old christian religion; not indeed exactly in its present state, but a little more refined, preserving those fundamental principles which were first established by the catholic fathers, and afterwards corrected and improved by the *great Reformers;* but lopping off those useless excresences which form the distinction between the most approved and popular sects; so as to reduce and blend all their numerous systems into one, in which they can all agree. This newmodelled, universal system of religion,

* By what authority do they look for two appearances, yet future? The scriptures afford no such authority. His first appearance, predicted by the Jewish prophets, took place among the Jews, who rejected and crucified him as an imposter. His second appearance was predicted, both by himself and his apostles, to be made manifest by his Spirit; and we have no promise of any other.

they expect, all will enjoy together, in perfect harmony; and with it, the pursuit of those earthly objects which they consider the most conducive to the happiness of man, in his present, natural state; but entirely disconnected with those unfortunate occurrences which now so often disturb and disappoint them in their pursuit of happiness.*

In the formation of such a millennium as this, they seem to forget that God has promised to create "new heavens and a new "earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness;" or that "the day of the "Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens "shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt "with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, "shall be burnt up."† They forget also that, "The Lord hath "purposed to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into con-"tempt all the honorable of the earth."‡ Or rather, they put far away this *evil day*, and place these events to the end of that glorious millennial period, expecting that they will then be fulfilled, not upon them, but upon the wicked. In short, they seem not to know what is meant by the "new heavens and new earth;" nor what is to be understood by the passing away of the first heavens and earth. For such is the force of natural ideas on the mind of "the natural man," who "receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God," that he always inclines to put a natural construction on those prophetic descriptions in the sacred writings, which relate to the second coming of Christ, and to the day of judgment. Hence the ideas of personality and locality in contemplating the coming of Christ; and hence the opinion of his coming in the natural clouds of the atmosphere, and operating upon the natural elements.

The idea of Christ being personally revealed in the natural element of flaming fire, "to judge the quick and the dead, to take vengeance on his adversaries," and receive the righteous into the Kingdom of his Father, is but a counterpart to their millennial plan. And here again, they differ so much in their ideas, and have formed so many different schemes concerning the first resurrection; the resurrection of natural human bodies; the order of trial; the form of decision; the awarding of judgment to the wicked; the nature and duration of their punishment; and many other things of a like kind, that the whole, taken together, is much more calculated to confuse and bewilder the mind, and lead mankind into darkness on these subjects, than to enlighten their understand-

* In anticipation of this happy state of religion, and of society, various attempts have already been made, in different places, and among different denominations, to bring about this desirable and long expected event; but unfortunately, like other *Babel-builders*, they cannot agree who shall be placed on high, or whose religion shall have the preeminence: Of course they soon get confounded and scattered abroad.

† 2 Pet. iii. 10, 13. ‡ Isa. xxiii. 9.

ings. It also affords a very striking proof, that the authors of the different schemes, are themselves involved in great darkness concerning these things; and confirms the declaration of the prophet Isaiah, that "darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people."

Many of late are inclined to think that the millennium has already begun to dawn upon the earth; and that those benevolent, humane and religious institutions which, of late years, have so greatly increased in the world, are so many evidences of its commencement. Societies for the abolition of slavery, missionary and bible societies, and humane and benevolent societies of every description, together with the extensive and general diffusion of the principles of civil and religious liberty, are considered, by many people, as certain preludes to the ushering in of that period, if not real evidences of its having already begun. But it is worthy of observation that, with all these highly esteemed and greatly boasted institutions, the general tenets of their religion remain the same as before; nor has there been any essential change with regard to its practical duties.

As the latter day of glory has been the theme of patriarchs and prophets, of poets and philosophers, of almost every age; and as it has been held up to the view of mankind by the promises of God, ever since the fall of man, and most pointedly confirmed by Jesus Christ and his inspired apostles; it is certainly rational, as well as scriptural, to believe that it will produce by far the greatest revolution that the world ever yet witnessed.

The first manifestation of Christ to the Jews, which was attended with a great change in the lives and manners of those who received him; which abolished their law religion, and established the gospel religion, certainly effected a revolution in religion unknown before. But as his appearance, at that time, was personally in the flesh, and consequently limited to time and place; and as the work he then commenced was but the prelude, the earnest of that which is to be made manifest in his second appearing; we must rationally believe that, in his second appearing, he will introduce, and bring to pass a work, of which all the former manifestations of God to the world, were but mere types and shadows; and compared with which, these remarkable revolutions in the civil, moral and religious world, are but preparatory events, designed to pave the way for the real work of that glorious revolution which will yet astonish all mankind.

Whatever may be the opinions of mankind concerning the second appearing of Christ, which has been represented by the spirit of prophecy, in many sublime figures and wonderful similitudes, and often in very mysterious language, certain it is, that those figurative representations can never be rightly understood till the time

of their fulfilment; and even then, by those only who come into the very spirit and work of the event itself. This accords with the testimony of Jesus to his disciples, shortly before his crucifixion. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the "angels of Heaven, but my Father only."*

In his last interview with his disciples, they being still ignorant of the nature of his Kingdom, notwithstanding he had said so much to them about it, asked him saying; "Lord wilt thou at this "time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" He answered, "It "is not for you to know the times, or the seasons, which the Father "hath put in his own power."† And the prophet Daniel, to whom many things were revealed concerning the coming of the Messiah, testifies saying; "And I heard, but I understood not: "then said I, O my Lord, what shall be the end of these things?" And it was answered, "Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are "closed up and sealed till the time of the end."‡ If then, these things were not understood by those witnesses of God to whom they were revealed, how can poor shortsighted mortals, at the present day, expect to be able to understand them before they enter into the work itself, to which these prophecies allude?

CHAPTER II.

The second coming of Christ not the appearance of the same personal Being, but a manifestation of the same Spirit. This illustrated by various similitudes, which also point out the increasing work of his Kingdom.

As God is a Spirit, so his work, pertaining to the restoration of fallen man, is a spiritual work. And as the first appearing of Christ, to take upon himself human nature, and declare his mission, was in the flesh; so his second appearing, for the redemption of his people, must be in the Spirit.

The word CHRIST is derived from the Greek word χριστος, which signifies *Anointed.* MESSIAH is a Hebrew word of the same import. Jesus being anointed with that Divine Spirit which proceeded from God, and which contained the elements of eternal life, was constituted *the Christ of God;* that is, *the anointed of God.* Wherever that Divine Spirit exists, there is Christ; or as the apostle, in writing to the Colossians, expresses it, "Christ in you, the hope of glory."|| It is certain that the person of Jesus Christ cannot be in any other person; yet, in speaking to his disciples, in reference to the time of his second appearing, he said; "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me,

* Matt. xxiv. 36. † Acts i. 6 & 7. ‡ Dan. xii. 8 & 9. || Col. i. 27.

"and I in you."* Here is an undeniable testimony of his coming, not in person, but in Spirit.

Christ, the Anointed of God, was first revealed in Jesus of Nazareth. The same Christ was also in the primitive Church. But when the spirit of Antichrist entered, and through the influence of human wisdom, took the lead and government of the church, then the Spirit of Christ was withdrawn: hence it was no more the church of Christ, but of Antichrist. The true church of Christ is his living body; but when the Spirit of Christ was withdrawn, and the spirit of Antichrist entered, it became the body of Antichrist of course it was no longer the body of Christ.

Jesus Christ, when speaking to his disciples of his second coming, was asked, "Where Lord?" He did not point out any particular place, but said, "Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together."† By this he plainly intimated that his presence, and his work would be in his body; that is, "*the* "*church*, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all "And he is the head of the body, the church."‡ By the gathering of the eagles, he shows, in a striking figure, that the evidence of his coming, and the nature of his work, will be seen and understood by the spiritual discernment of those who, like watchful keen-eyed eagles, in quest of food, will be able to discriminate between a living and a dead body, and gather to that which affords spiritual life and nourishment, and let the dead alone.|| Thus, in his true and living body will Christ be found, "in the dispensation of the fulness of times."¶ There will those truly honest and faithful souls, "who hunger and thirst after righteousness," be gathered; and there "they shall be filled;" while the lifeless churches of Antichrist, like so many dead carcases, which have long been sinking in their own corruptions, are cautiously avoided.

It may perhaps be objected, that when the Savior ascended there stood by the apostles two men in white apparel, and said "This same Jesus which is taken up from you into Heaven, shall "so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into Heaven. This however, affords no proof that the natural body of Jesus was taken up into Heaven; but his Spirit undoubtedly did ascend. Yet this miraculous ascension was seen by none but those whom he had chosen to bear witness of it; and their testimony was the only evidence the world ever had of it; and even that, very few were willing to believe in that day. Nor did any others in those days ever know it, excepting those who in faith received the testimony and spirit of those who first declared his ascension. They knew, in truth, that he had ascended, and that he gave gifts unto them, by which they were raised above an earthly nature, and set

* John xiv 20. † Luke xvii 37. ‡ Eph i. 23. & Col i. 18

|| It is asserted by some naturalists that the real eagle will not feed upon a putrid carcass

¶ Eph. i. 10.

with him "in heavenly places." If then, Christ is to come *in like manner*, it certainly follows, that he must come equally out of the sight of natural men, and be equally unknown to the world. Of course, none but his chosen witnesses can have any knowledge of his coming; so that the world must again rely on their testimony, or remain in unbelief.

Again: Christ, by his Spirit, testified to John in the isle of Patmos, saying; "Behold I come as a thief! Blessed is he that "watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and "they see his shame."* It is well known that a thief comes privately, in the night, while mankind are asleep, and of course, not on their watch. "For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and "gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, "and his glory shall be seen upon thee."† Thus it appears that the time of Christ's coming was to be a time of darkness; (of spiritual darkness to the world, no doubt;) while he was to arise in his glory, upon those who were found faithful to watch and keep their garments—to keep themselves clothed with the garments of righteousness, unspotted with sin.

It is worthy of particular remark, that about the period of the first manifestation of Christ's second appearing, there was a time of great spiritual darkness, which continued for a number of years. And tho great and exalted were the professions of christianity, throughout the countries called christendom; yet the pure and genuine spirit of christianity was scarcely known upon earth. There were, indeed, many who made great professions of religion; yet their works of darkness greatly dishonored their professions; so that they were evidently walking in darkness and discovering their shame, from day to day.

This has become more and more apparent among nominal professors, even to this day; and more especially among the higher classes of professing christians, both ministers and people. And thus we see pride and ambition, fraud and violence, hypocrisy and deceit, luxury and lust, drunkenness and debauchery, with almost every crime that can be named, still carried on under the sanctimonious cloke of a religious profession; while even the common people, who make no profession at all, can see through the deception of their pretended goodness—can see the shame of their nakedness, through the flimsy cloke of such a profession, which is enough to make the heart sicken at the name of a religion which covers such abominations.

Thus Christ having actually *come as a thief*, in the time of such extensive spiritual darkness, while mankind, who are living in sin, and spiritually asleep, have been utterly unconscious of his coming, and not being, even now, on their watch, cannot discover his ap-

* Rev. xvi. 15. † Isa. lx. 2.

pearance. People of this description, who make a great profession of religion, are ever more ready to contend against the true light of God, at such a time, than those who make no such profession. So it was in the days of Christ's first appearance; the Scribes and Pharisees, the chief priests and elders, and all the great and mighty among the Jews, were his greatest opposers and persecutors, while "the common people heard him gladly."*

Many comparisons have been made, under prophetic inspiration, and recorded in the sacred writings, to show the nature of the coming of Christ, and the state of the world at that period. These comparisons, tho natural, evidently point out a spiritual work: for the work of Christ's second appearing, being necessarily spiritual, must be represented by natural similitudes, if represented at all, there being no possible way to represent spiritual things to natural men, only by natural similitudes. These, tho they clearly show that the wicked will be taken unawares, in their sins; yet they almost invariably point out a progressive, increasing word. Jesus Christ, in his parables, likened the Kingdom of Heaven to many things which, in their nature, were very different from each other; such as a grain of mustard-seed; the sower and his seed; the good seed and the tares; the leaven; the net cast into the sea; and many other things. But as the Kingdom itself is spiritual, and the work thereof a spiritual work; it could not be literally like any of those natural things to which it was compared; much less like all of them.

The Kingdom of Christ, being a spiritual Kingdom, is altogether beyond the conception of the natural man, until his mind is enlightened by the Spirit of Christ; and therefore the nature of it could not be understood, even by his disciples, who, at that time, were but natural men. And yet the things which Jesus brought up to view, as comparisons, were very apt similitudes, by which he could, with the greatest propriety, represent many things which he knew would be made manifest, during his reign upon earth. So that when the day itself is ushered in, its work begun, and the nature of it understood by those who are in it; then these similitudes appear very striking and appropriate, and must operate on every candid mind, as an incontestible evidence in favor of the present work, and prove, to a certainty, that Christ himself is in it; and that his parables and predictions could not, with any consistency, be fulfilled in any other way.

Thus the Kingdom of Heaven is compared to a grain of mustard-seed, which was then considered as the least of all seeds. "But "when it is sown, it groweth up and becometh greater than all "herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the "air may lodge under the shadow of it."† This clearly shows

* Mark xii. 37. † Mark iv. 32.

the first operations of the work of Christ, in his second coming, to be, not only very small, but entirely out of the sight of the world; as much so as a grain of mustard-seed is, when covered in the earth. It also shews a progressive and increasing work, like the growth of the seed to a large plant, the greatest among herbs, branching out like a tree, so as to afford a shelter for the birds of the air.

Again, it is compared to leaven. "The Kingdom of Heaven is "like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures "of meal, till the whole was leavened."* This is also a figurative representation of the hidden and progressive operations of the Spirit of Christ, in his second appearing; which is entirely out of sight of the world of mankind, both professors and profane; and yet it is a work which operates with a progressive increase, in every faithful soul.

The Kingdom of Heaven is also compared to a man's sowing good seed in his field, and afterward his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat. This clearly shows that wherever the work of God begins, and the seed of Christ is sown, there the enemy follows, with his secret influences, his works of darkness, to corrupt and contaminate the good by a mixture of evil, intending thereby to dishonor and abase the genuine fruits of the true gospel of Christ, by endeavoring to blend therewith his wicked and corrupt fruits. Evidences of this have appeared, more or less, in every place where the gospel has been planted, since the first opening of the testimony in America; and will undoubtedly continue till the final separation shall take place between the good and the evil, and each shall receive its due reward.

The season of harvest is a very apt similitude of the coming of Christ. "The harvest is the end of the world, and the reapers are the angels."† It is well known that the work of harvest is a progressive work; and tho it may require the reapers many days to accomplish it; yet every stalk of grain, whether good or bad, when encircled by the sickle of the reaper, is very suddenly cut down; and tho but an instant before, it was majestically waving in the field, without any premonition of its sudden fall, it is henceforth forever separated from the foundation on which it stood, and must now pass through a new scene, and either be gathered to a place of safety, for the use of the husbandman, or devoted to destruction, according as it shall be found to be either good or bad. And such will be the fate of all souls in the great harvest of the world. Thus the useful wheat and worthless tares are used, as plain similitudes, to show the distinction which will be made between those who do good, and those who do evil; and the result

* Matt. xiii 33 † Matt. xiii 38 to 42. See also Rev. xiv. 15 to the end.

of the parable is a certain token of that righteous and impartial judgment which will reward all souls according to their works.

"Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a net that was "cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind; which, when it "was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the "good into vessels, but cast the bad away." This points out a great and important work which, in its progress, will make a final separation between good and evil. "So shall it be at the end of "the world: the angels (signifying the messengers of truth) shall "come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just."* This has been continually fulfilling ever since the first gathering of the people in America; and these are the people, "upon whom the ends of the world are come."†

The event of Christ's second coming is also compared to the time of Noah, and the days before the flood. "For as in the days "that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marry-"ing and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into "the ark; and knew not till the flood came and took them all away; "so shall it be also in the days of the son of man."‡

Noah was called *a preacher of righteousness.* But it appears that the inhabitants of the old world were disobedient to his testimony which undoubtedly continued during the whole time the ark was building, which is said to be a hundred and twenty years. But notwithstanding their unbelief and disobedience, they were at last overtaken in their sins, and could not escape. The forementioned similitude of our Savior, is evidently designed, and well calculated to show the state of unbelief, disobedience and disrespect to the testimony of truth, in which mankind will be found; and their careless insensibility and disregard respecting the second coming of Christ; and that altho they will be earnestly and repeatedly warned by the preachers of righteousness, from time to time, and in all probability, even from generation to generation, during the time of Christ's reign upon earth; yet they will not believe the testimony, nor turn from their wickedness; but still go on, "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage," seeking their own gratifications, and pursuing their own pleasures, until they are overtaken by judgments which they cannot escape.

Tho the judgments of God upon the wicked are often spoken of as coming suddenly, which is frequently the case in reality; yet in the time of Noah's flood, it rained "forty days and forty nights;" and in all probability, the destruction of lives was not fully accomplished till the end of that period; (for there could have been no use in continuing the flood after its design was accomplished.) So in the present day, many may remain secure for a long time; but the deluge of destruction, tho it may endure many ages, and

* Matt. xiii. 47, 48, 49. † See 1 Cor. x. 11. ‡ Matt. xxiv. 38, 39. & Luke xvii. 26.

operate in many ways, will finally accomplish the work for which it is sent.

CHAPTER III.

The second manifestation of Christ not instantly universal, but gradual and progressive, like the rising of the sun.

It has long been maintained that Christ is to come in the clouds of heaven, and that all shall see him. In a spiritual sense, this is true, and accords with his own testimony: "They shall see the "Son of man coming in the clouds of Heaven, with power and "great glory." Again, when questioned before the Jewish council, he said, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the "right hand of Power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven," And again; "Behold he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall "see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of "the earth shall wail because of him."* These and other similar passages are often advanced as evidences that Christ is not only to come openly, in the clouds, but that he will suddenly appear in the most public manner, so as to be seen at once, by all mankind, the wicked as well as the righteous, who have lived in all ages, and in all quarters of the world.

But it ought to be considered in the first place, that these clouds are not the common clouds of the atmosphere, but *the clouds of Heaven;* therefore they must be heavenly clouds—clouds of faithful witnesses of God, who are ready and willing to embrace the testimony of Christ, whenever and wherever it shall appear; and to declare it to the world without restraint and without disguise. "Who are these that fly as *a cloud*, and as the doves to their win-"dows?—Seeing we are compassed about with so great *a cloud* "of witnesses."† Thus cloud is used in scripture as a figure to express a multitude; and in this sense it was often used by ancient writers, both sacred and profane.

Secondly. As Christ, the anointed of God, is a Spirit, and can only be seen and known in the spirit; therefore his Kingdom must be spiritual and divine; not natural and sensual. Hence, as before stated, his appearance must be in the spirit; and the clouds in which he appears must be spiritual clouds, pertaining to the spiritual heavens; and these things must be discerned by spiritual light: for, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the "Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him; neither can he "know them, because they are spiritually discerned."‡ Yet the natural man looks for Christ to come in a bodily appearance,

* See Matt. xxiv. 30. chap. xxvi 64 and Rev i. 7. † Isa. lx. 8. & Heb xii, 1.
‡ 1 Cor. ii. 14.

through the clouds of the natural heavens, and expects, with his natural eyes, to behold in him a supernatural being, magnificently great and transcendantly glorious; and supposes that his appearance will be so universally visible that every eye in heaven, earth and hell shall see him at once.

But a little reflection will show the inconsistency of this opinion. For if Christ should descend in person, from the starry regions to this earth, and appear in our hemisphere, tho in ever so great splendor, he could not be seen at the same time, by those who live on the opposite side of the globe. But in order to be seen by them, in the same manner, he must descend in their hemisphere. And to be seen in both hemispheres at once, he must descend in two opposite directions at the same time. But if Christ is to make a bodily appearance, as a personal or material being, as many suppose, it must be impossible for him to descend in this manner. For it is a selfevident truth, as every person of sense will acknowledge, that no material substance or local being, can descend from two opposite directions in the heavens, and appear in two opposite hemispheres, and on two opposite sides of the earth, at one and the same time. Thus the natural man's plan destroys itself. But if we consider Christ as the elemental spirit of eternal life, the difficulty is at once removed; because upon this principle, that Spirit can appear in many places at the same time, however distant or differently situated.

Thirdly. It appears evident, not only from the testimony of the scriptures, but from the very nature of God, who is Spirit, that the work of Christ in the new creation, pertaining to the salvation and redemption of man, is a spiritual work. This none can deny. Therefore the things relating to Christ's second coming, and the finishing of the mystery of God, must be of a spiritual nature. How then should *the natural man* be able to conceive of these things in their true light, seeing he *receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God?*

The ideas formed in the mind of man, concerning the coming of Christ in the natural clouds, and appearing visible to the natural eye, are merely natural conceptions; natural enough indeed to the natural man, and therefore, if the forecited testimony of the apostle be true, they must be false conceptions. It is true that, in the progress of his work, "every eye shall see him;" for he will be made manifest to all, either to their everlasting joy or sorrow; but they will see him with the eyes of the soul, not of the body. Those who accept the invitation, and come when called, and faithfully obey the testimony of the gospel, will see him to their joy and salvation; but those who reject it, to their condemnation and sorrow. To the former it will prove "the savor of life unto life;" but to the latter, "the savor of death unto death."

But it may be objected that Jesus Christ himself has said, "As "the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the "west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." This passage of scripture is generally quoted as an evidence of the instantaneous and universal manifestation of Christ in his second appearing. But we apprehend that when the passage is duly considered, and its real import rightly understood, the objection founded upon it will appear groundless. It is well known that our Savior often made use of natural things, and natural occurrences, as similitudes to represent and illustrate things of a spiritual nature. In the above quoted passage, he alluded to the dawning of the day, and the breaking forth of the morning light in the east, as a clear and striking similitude of the commencement of that period, so often represented in scripture, as the day of gospel light and liberty, or thousand years of Christ's reign upon earth. This appears evident from the following considerations.

1. It is not the peculiar nature of lightning "to come out of the east and shine even unto the west;" its flashes, tho often seen in every direction, are known, in this country, to come out of the west much oftener than out of the east; and they never extend so as to be seen but a few miles distant, in any direction. If therefore Christ intended, by the similitude of lightning, to represent an instantaneous and universal display of his second appearance, the similitude is quite imperfect,—the comparison falls very short.

2. The Greek word ἀστραπη, tho sometimes properly translated *lightning*, signifies any vivid brightness or shining light, as that of the sun, or of a star, a lamp or candle, as the same word is used in other places.* It is sometimes used to signify the *breaking forth of light*, as the dawning of the day, or the rising of the sun, which is evidently the meaning in the text quoted above. The light breaks forth in the east, "and shineth even unto the west," still progressing on in its western direction, till it enlightens the whole earth; and this it will effectually do in the space of twenty-four hours, so that all nations, even *every eye*, may see the light thereof; unless it be those who through blindness or some other cause, are deprived of that privilege.

We also find the same testimony in Luke, but a little differently expressed: "As the lightning that lighteneth," or more properly, "As *the shining light* that *shineth forth* from the one part under "heaven, and giveth light unto the other part under heaven; so "shall also the Son of man be in his day."† This plainly implies that, as the light of the natural day (alluding to the sun as before) proceeds in its course, enlightening the earth from place to place;

* The same original word which in Matthew xxiv. 27, is translated *lightning*, is in Luke xi. 36, translated *bright shining*; in Luke xxiv. 4, as an adjective, it is translated *shining*; and in Acts ix. 3, used as a verb, it is translated *shined*; as the reader may see.

† Luke xvii. 24.

so in the progressive increase of divine light, in the millennial day, it will continue to shine from one place to another, unto all the earth or every part under heaven, shall be fully illuminated. Not that all will receive the light and profit by it; for many will undoubtedly hate and shun it to their condemnation; according to the testimony of our Savior: "And this is the condemnation, that "light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than "light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth "evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds "should be reproved."*

The same ideas concerning an instantaneously universal display of the coming of Christ, in the clouds of the sky, which so generally prevail at the present day, were doubtless entertained by the translators of the Bible. Hence it is easy to account for the translation of so many passages in a manner most favorable to their preconceived notions; and especially where the words in the original would admit of such a translation.

As to the expressions, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump," and such like, nothing can be proved from them to confirm the opinion of an instantaneous and, at the same time, a universal display of Christ's second coming to judge the world. Nor are those expressions, even in their most literal sense, by any means inconsistent with the idea of the event's having begun to take place in this country more than forty years ago; but is perfectly consistent with the belief of its having taken place suddenly, with respect to thousands, during that period of time; and also with the belief that it may take place as suddenly, with respect to many thousands more, within forty years to come. For altho the increase of the light of the gospel in the soul, is gradual and progressive, from its dawn to the perfect day; yet the conviction of sin, and also the first rays of light, are often sudden and instantaneous; and so also are the judgments of God on the wicked, and many other changes which both the righteous and the wicked will find to pass through, before God shall have finished his work in them, and with them.

But it will be necessary to illustrate, more particularly, the progress of the work of God, in Christ's second coming, by the similitude of the breaking forth of light in the east: for as before observed, our Savior, in this similitude, evidently alluded to the sun, the light of the natural day, and not to the lightning. It is well known that the day first commences by the dawning of light in the east. The twilight succeeds; and the morning light gradually increases till the rising of the sun. The sun however, does not shine over the face of the whole earth at one and the same time; but appears rising from one degree of longitude to another still further west,

* John iii. 19, 20. The word here translated *reproved* signifies *discovered* or *exposed*.

until, in the space of twenty-four hours, it is seen rising and enlightening the whole habitable globe. So that it necessarily happens, that while the eastern nations are enjoying the cheering rays of the morning sun, the western world is wrapped in midnight darkness.

Agreeable to this comparison, if we consider the great length of the millennial day, we may readily perceive that, in its progress through its whole course, there must be a great difference in the period of its commencement, in different parts of the world. The labors and employments of the natural day are as various as the times of their commencement. The act of waking from sleep, of rising, dressing and performing the duties of the morning, or of making preparation for the more important work of the day, is very different from the general labors of the day; yet this morning labor is really necessary, and preparatory to that which appears more important. But it must be considered that this preparatory or morning labor cannot take place all over the earth at once; and so it is also with regard to the general labors of the day. For while the labors of the morning are going on in one part of the earth, the midday labors are progressing in another part, and the evening labors in another. Thus the morning, midday, afternoon and evening labors are all in actual operation at one and the same time, but in different and distant parts of the earth.

"So also shall the coming of the Son of man be." The light of the millennial day is as gradual and various, in its commencement and progress, as the light of the natural day; and, like this, cannot possibly take place throughout the world at once, any more than the light of the sun can be seen at once over the face of the whole earth. It appears to be the prevailing opinion among those who are looking for the millennium, that the preparation for that day is to be finished over the whole world first; and that the second coming of Christ is to take place in a similar manner, and become at once universal. This idea is wholly inconsistent with reason, and has no foundation in truth.

Among the many providential events which are evidently preparatory to the introduction of this new era to the world, we may remark,

1. The extensive and increasing prevalence of the spirit of *religious toleration* among mankind. This is absolutely necessary in order to check and bind the spirit of persecution, which would otherwise rage beyond control, at the introduction of a new religion which must and will be contrary to every feeling of the carnal nature of man.

2. The increasing sense of the importance of *peace and good will* among mankind, as absolutely essential to christianity; and the many exertions in various places to promote this desirable ob-

ject by means of *peace societies* and *peace publications*. These are essentially necessary, in order to curb those Cain-like passions of man, which would otherwise defeat, if possible, every attempt to propagate a peaceful and sinless gospel among the inhabitants of a contentious and sinful world.

3. The many exertions which are made through the influence of benevolent and humane societies, and other liberal means, for the *abolition of slavery*, and the amelioration of mankind. This is an important object: for unless every nation, class and color of people can enjoy free, just and equitable rights, they cannot be made the partakers of a free, just and equitable religion, the benevolent and impartial gift of Him who "hath made of one blood all nations of men."

4. The increasing attention to the important concerns of religion, and the many religious revivals which are continually springing up in various places, attended with manifestations of peculiar light and power. These are the most effectual operations of Divine Providence to excite mankind to see and feel the necessity of finding some way of deliverance from the bondage of sin, and to call them to that genuine repentance which leads to a life of righteousness and true holiness, "without which no man shall see the Lord."

Some seem to be aware that these events are preparatory to the millennium, and view them as evident signs of the coming of Christ, while they are utterly unconscious that the preparation and the real work of the day, are both in actual progression, at the same time, agreeable to the similitude already noticed. The work of rising from spiritual sleep, of being convinced of the need of a Savior, and of lifting up the head and looking for redemption in Christ's second coming,* are all very different from receiving and walking in him, and being in the real work of his Kingdom; yet all these are necessary, and pertain to the work of the millennial day. The forementioned providential events are evident preparations, and actual signs of the approach of that day to an extensive increase, which, in a limited degree, has already commenced.

Many, seeing these signs, are looking for the appearance of the Son of man, not knowing that he is already come, nor where to look for him. The reflecting rays of the Sun of righteousness wake souls from the sleep of a fallen, sinful nature, and afford them light to see their lost and deplorable state, and their absolute need of a Savior. Hence they sigh and groan for deliverance, and hence they pray and wrestle in spirit, for that redemption which is promised in the day of Christ's second appearing. And all who continue honest and faithful to the preparatory light, looking and waiting for his coming, are noticed of God, and will be in

* See Luke xxi. 28.

readiness to receive and enter into the perfect work of the day, whenever it shall be manifested to them.

CHAPTER IV.

The Manifestation of Christ in the Female.

MANY objections have been raised against the doctrine of the appearance of Christ in the female, the principle ground of which seems to be, that it is not warranted by scripture, nor consistent with reason. To obviate these objections and confirm the doctrine, both by scripture and reason, is the design of this chapter.

In searching the records of scripture we find that, on many extraordinary occasions, in past ages, there were females, as well as males, raised up and qualified to do the will of God and to accomplish his work. There were prophetesses, as well as prophets, in those days; which evidently shows that women, as well as men, were not only designed to enjoy the special favor of God; but also that they were originally designed to have a correspondent share in teaching and guiding the human race, in directing the destinies of nations and governing the world, which is composed of females as well as of males, who certainly stand in need of instruction, direction and government.

It appears evident that Miriam the prophetess had a share with Moses and Aaron, in delivering the children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, and in leading them through the wilderness: for thus saith the Lord; "I brought thee up out of the land of "Egypt, and redeemed thee out of the house of servants; and I "sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam."* Esther was also raised up, as an instrument in the hands of God, to deliver the Jews from destruction, when no man was found able to do it.

Deborah the prophetess was also raised up, in the days of the Judges, and set over Israel; and, through her instrumentality, a very great deliverance was wrought for that nation.† This appears the more extraordinary, as being a deliverance from their bondage to the original inhabitants of the land of Canaan, whom they had been commanded to cast out and destroy; and it appears to be the only time that they, as a nation, were ever brought into bondage to these natives of the land. "And the hand of the children of Israel prospered and prevailed," under the ministration of Deborah, until they destroyed the power of the Canaanites, so that they never obtained any dominion over Israel afterwards. Thus the work which had been begun by Joshua, (who was a type of Jesus,) was at length completed by a female.

Herein was typified the work of God in Christ's first and

* Micah vi. 4. † See Judges, chap. iv.

second appearance, as it respected the warfare of christians against their spiritual enemies. The Canaanites prefigured the carnal passions of human nature, which God had commanded his people to cast out, and against which Jesus Christ began the warfare. But by leaguing with them, as the Israelites did with the Canaanites, the primitive Christians, in process of time, lost their power and their order, and were overcome and held in bondage by these carnal passions, until the way was opened for a final deliverance, through the instrumentality of a female.

The song of Deborah, after this extraordinary victory, is worthy of remark. "They ceased in Israel, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel." If then a mother was raised up in Israel to deliver that nation from their bondage to the Canaanites, and to destroy their power and dominion over Israel, why should it be thought inconsistent for God to raise up a mother in the spiritual Israel, to deliver them from their bondage to the spiritual Canaanites, and to destroy their power and dominion, and thus to complete the work which Jesus began?

The many instances recorded in the sacred writings, prove beyond dispute, that in past ages, God did condescend to reveal his mind and will to females, who were then commissioned, by Divine Authority, to bear testimony thereof to man. And the two signal instances of deliverance effected through the instrumentality of Deborah and Esther, are sufficient to show that God did, on each of these extraordinary occasions, raise up and empower a female to accomplish an extraordinary deliverance, which was beyond the power of man to effect without their assistance.

If then, God has, in these last days, raised up a female to reveal the true testimony and Spirit of Christ, and endowed her with power to effect the deliverance of lost man from the bondage of sin, and to usher in the latter day of glory, shall man reject the work on that account? Is it too debasing to the pride and haughtiness of fallen man? If so, let it be remembered that, "The Lord "of hosts hath purposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to "bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth. And the "loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of "men shall be made low; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in "that day."*

It is well known that when souls come to be awakened to a feeling sense of their need of salvation, their general cry is, "What "shall we do to be saved?—Lord, send by whom thou wilt send—"Work by means of thy own chusing; only show us thy will—"bring us salvation from the bondage of sin." It is on these conditions we are willing to receive Christ, tho revealed in a manner contrary to every feeling of a fallen nature. We are determined

* Isa. ii. 17. and xxiii. 9.

to exalt the Lord alone—to know none but Christ, wherever manifested and in whomsoever found, and to bear the cross, tho it crucify us to the world, and the world to us.

Altho it was necessary that the Spirit of Christ should be manifested in both male and female; yet no man nor woman that ever appeared on earth, could ever be a proper object of divine worship. "God is Spirit; and they that worship him, must worship in spirit "and in truth."* God is therefore the only proper object of divine worship; and no one can ever worship in the spiritual work of God, unless called and directed by the Spirit of Christ: for according to his own testimony, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me."† Therefore no man can worship God, but through Christ; and the only true worship that we can render to God, is to honor and glorify him by yielding obedience to his will. And tho a portion of the Spirit of Christ must be in every soul, in order to unite them to his body; yet the manifestation of the will of God for the guide and direction of souls, in his true spiritual work, must be revealed in the order of God's appointment, through those witnesses whom he sends for that purpose.

As the Divine Spirit and Will of God, in these last days, has been manifested in Christ, through the two first messengers of salvation; so the same Spirit continues to manifest his will, through the same line and order, in the church of Christ, and will ever continue so to do, as long as Christ shall continue to have a true church on earth. Therefore, as the ancients worshipped the God of their fathers; so worship we that God who has been revealed to us by our spiritual parents in the gospel, whom God hath raised up, and sent to open the way of salvation to us. We worship neither man nor woman; but we honor and obey the Spirit of Christ, whether revealed in man, woman or child.

The natural creation, and the things therein contained, are figurative representations of the spiritual creation which is to supersede it, as we have already shown.‡ The first parents of the natural world were created male and female. The man was first in his creation, and the woman was afterwards taken from his substance, and placed in her proper order to be the second in the government and dominion of the natural world; and the order of man's creation was not complete till this was done. For it must be acknowledged by all, that without male and female, the perfection of man, in his natural creation, must have been less complete than that of the inferior part of the creation, which was evidently created male and female. Hence it must appear obvious, that in the spiritual creation, man and woman, when raised from a natural to a spiritual state, must still be male and female: for the spiritual state of man, which is substantial and eternal, cannot be less perfect in its order,

* John iv. 24. † John xiv. 6. ‡ See Part iii. chap iii. p. 116.

than his natural state, which is but temporal, and figurative of the spiritual.

As the true church of Christ, which is his body, is composed of male and female, as its members; and as there must be a correspondent spiritual union between the male and female, to render the church complete, as a spiritual body; so it is essentially necessary that such a spiritual union should exist in the head of that body, which is Christ; otherwise there could be no source from which such a correspondent, spiritual union could flow to the body. It must be admitted by every reasonable person, that the order of man cannot be complete without the woman. If so, then the church cannot exist, in its proper order, without male and female members: for, "neither is the man without the woman, nor the woman without the man, in the Lord."* And it would be very unreasonable to suppose that the body of Christ should be more complete and perfect, in its order, than the head. This would give the body a superiority over the head.

This spiritual union between the male and female, in the body and in the head of the church, is that which the apostle calls *a great mystery*.† And indeed it is a great mystery to the lost children of men, who seem to have no conception of any other union between the male and female, than that which is natural, according to the order of the flesh. Nor do they seem to know any other design in the creation of the female, nor any other essential use for her than that of carnal enjoyment in a sexual union, and the production of offspring through that medium. But the work of Christ, being a spiritual work, the union must therefore be spiritual; and it is impossible for souls to come into this work, and enjoy this union, unless the Spirit of Christ become their life.

Since then, Christ must appear in every female, as well as in every male, before they can be saved; and since that Divine Spirit has appeared in one man, whom God has chosen as the Captain of our salvation, and an example of righteousness to all men; is it not reasonable and consistent that the same anointing power (which is Christ) should also appear in a woman, and distinguish her as a leader, and an example of righteousness to all women?

It may be asked, How can Christ appear in a woman? With the same propriety we might ask, how can Christ appear in a man? Christ is a Spirit: "The Lord is that Spirit."‡ In that Spirit is contained the only power of salvation. If Christ could not appear in a man, then no man could be saved; so also, if Christ could not appear in a woman, then no woman could be saved. Christ first appeared in Jesus of Nazareth, by which he was constituted the head of the new and spiritual creation of God. The Spirit of Christ was in the primitive church; and the Spirit of Christ is also in

* 1 Cor. xi. 11. ‡ Eph. v. 30. † 2 Cor. iii. 17.

every one of his true and faithful followers. The Spirit of Christ is the same, whether revealed in man, woman or child.

It may perhaps be urged, by way of objection, that if a female was to be raised up, to stand in a correspondent connection with the first-born Son of God, in order to usher in the latter day of glory, and bring about the regeneration of a lost world, it would appear reasonable that she also, as well as he, should have been brought forth by a miraculous birth. But a little reflection will show the impropriety of this. Such a birth would not have corresponded with the figure given in the creation of the first man and woman. Adam was called "the figure of him that was to come."* He had a miraculous creation, being formed out of the dust of the earth. Jesus had also a miraculous birth, being born of a virgin without the co-operation of man. But this virgin, being a natural woman, a daughter of Adam, her body was of the earth; and in this sense, she was as the dust of the earth, tho in its highest state of natural perfection under the fall, as was needful it should be, when designed for such an extraordinary purpose.

Eve, who was "the figure of *her* that was to come," was not created out of the dust of the earth, as Adam was, but was formed of his substance, and taken from his body; therefore she was dependent on him, and it was her duty to be subject to him as her head and lord. Had the woman been created in the same manner that the man was, there would have been two separate heads of the creation; and as neither of them could have had the pre-eminence; so neither of them could have been placed in a state of subordination to the other. So also, agreeable to this figure, the second Eve was not brought forth in the same manner that the second Adam was; but, as to her person, she came into the world as all other women do. But as the substance of the first woman was taken from the body of the first man; so that Divine Spirit with which the second woman was endowed, and which constituted her the second Eve, was taken from the Spirit of the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ; therefore she was necessarily dependent on him, was subject to him, and always acknowledged him, as her head and lord.

It was absolutely necessary that the human tabernacle of Jesus should not only be created in a supernatural manner, by the immediate operation of the Eternal FATHER and MOTHER; but also in a state superior to that of the first Adam; otherwise he could never have had the pre-eminence, as to the superiority of his origin. As no stream can rise higher than its fountain; so no being could proceed from the loins of Adam with a life superior to that which he possessed: for he was formed of the elements of temporal life,

* Rom. v, 14.

and not of the elements of eternal life.* Therefore, had Jesus been begotten of the seed of Adam, his life could not have been superior to the life of Adam; nor could he have had superior power: hence he could not have been the first to possess eternal life; and therefore the source of eternal life could not have been in him; consequently it could not have been brought to light by him.

But Jesus being created in a state superior to that of the first Adam, he was the first who received the elements of eternal life from his *Eternal Parents*. His heavenly descent was announced by the message of the angel to Mary: "The Holy Ghost shall "come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow "thee."† Here was plainly manifested the operation of the ETERNAL TWO, the HIGHEST and the HOLY GHOST, by whom the Son of God was created.‡ And as the human race, in their fallen and lost state, are composed of male and female; so it is necessary that the Spirit of Christ, in which is the only power of salvation, should be manifested in both male and female, in order to complete the work of regeneration and salvation.

But it may still be urged, that if it was necessary for God to endow a female with the spirit of eternal life, to make her a partaker with Jesus Christ, in the power of salvation, and to co-operate with him in the work of regeneration, it would at least have appeared more reasonable and consistent, had she been a virgin character. But it ought to be considered that mankind are lost in the works of generation; and that it was therefore necessary that one who was actually under that loss, should first set the example and take the lead in coming out of it. Therefore, had a virgin character been chosen, tho she might have been a pattern of righteousness; yet she could not have set the example of coming out of a state into which she had never entered. Jesus Christ himself never went into the work of generation; therefore he could not set the example of coming out of it; but he could, and did set the example of abstaining from it, as well as from all manner of evil.

As the first Eve, through the deceitful influence of the power of evil, was the first to violate the temple of chastity, and to lead mankind into the work of generation, in actual disobedience to the positive command of God, and by this means corrupted the work at the very fountain; so a female, who was the natural offspring of the first Eve, and under the same loss, was the proper character

* Had Adam been formed of the elements of eternal life, he could not have died: for that which is eternal can never die. But when God spake to Adam concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he said, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." This was fulfilled.

† Luke i. 35.

‡ It is proper to remark here, that in all languages, the term Holy-Ghost is the same as Holy Spirit, and is generally expressed by a substantive in the neuter gender, which, of itself, implies neither male nor female. The application of masculine or feminine terms to the Holy Spirit, must depend on its relative manifestations, and its operation in the line of male or female.

to be empowered to break the charm which binds mankind under that loss, and to take the lead in coming out of it.

Ann Lee was the distinguished female who was chosen for that purpose; and being wrought upon by the power of God, she actually took up a final cross against that nature, and against all those propensities which lead to the gratification of it. And having received the Spirit of Christ, by the operation of which her soul was purified from the fallen nature of the flesh, she rose superior to it, and by her example and testimony, she actually led the way out of that nature and all its works, and was prepared to stand in a proper order to manifest the Spirit of Christ in the female line. Hence the image and likeness of the Eternal Mother was formed in her, as the firstborn Daughter, as really as the image and likeness of the Eternal Father was formed in the Lord Jesus, the firstborn Son. Thus was she constituted the second heir in the covenant of promise, and was placed in a correspondent connection with Jesus Christ, as the second pillar of the church of God in the new creation.

We would by no means be understood to apply this character to the human tabernacle of Ann Lee; that tabernacle was but flesh and blood, like those of all other women; but it was a chosen vessel, occupied as an instrument, by the Spirit of Christ, the Lord from Heaven, in which the second appearance of that Divine Spirit was ushered into the world. It is this Spirit which has constituted her immortal part the second pillar in the new and spiritual creation; it is this Spirit which is the image and likeness of the Eternal Mother, and which is, in reality, the true Bride of the Lamb, and the first Mother of all the children of Christ. The apostle saith, "We preach Christ the Power of God and the Wisdom of God." But the Spirit of Wisdom in Christ, could not be manifested in her true character on earth, as the Mother Spirit in the work of regeneration, until she was revealed in the female, as a Mother *in* Christ.

It may perhaps be further objected that, according to the testimony of the apostle, Jesus is "the author and finisher of faith;" that his mission into the world was to "save his people from their sins"—to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;" and that "there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved;" and therefore we must be saved by his power alone, if saved at all. But, as we have already said, Christ is a Spirit; and it is by this Spirit only that salvation is wrought. It is this Spirit in the male and female, by which souls are begotten and born in the regeneration. And as this Spirit is Christ, and whether it be revealed in male or female for salvation, it can never be separated from Christ; therefore it is by this Spirit of Christ only, that salvation and final redemption can be wrought in any soul.

Tho the day of redemption was predicted in early ages, and the period alluded to, when a new order of things was to take place; and tho the nature of these things was often pointed out by types and shadows, and the certainty of the event declared by the spirit of prophecy, under the law, and afterwards more fully illustrated and confirmed by Jesus Christ and his apostles; yet a full revelation of the fallen nature of the flesh, and of that power which was to accomplish its destruction, and usher in the real work of the latter day of glory, could not take place until the time arrived for the manifestation of Christ in the female, in whom the second appearance of Christ commenced. This is the reason why even those who have been most highly favored of God, under former dispensations, have never been able to discover the nature of man's loss, and the real foundation of iniquity. Consequently a true spiritual union between the sexes, could never be fully maintained: for a union between the sexes naturally inclines to the flesh. Therefore, until the female was brought into her proper order, in the spiritual work of God, a union between the sexes, tho begun in the spirit, generally ended in the flesh. And this has been the effectual cause of a declension from the spiritual work of God, in all religious revivals, from the falling away of the primitive church even to this day.

Tho thousands in past ages, who conscientiously lived up to the best light they were able to obtain, were so far enlightened by the Spirit of God, as to see the natural tendency of indulging those inordinate desires which led to these baleful corruptions, and honestly took up their crosses, and, for a season, maintained a principle of continency; yet the fountain of iniquity was not discovered; the vail of the flesh, which is the covering that darkened the sight, was not yet removed. So great indeed has been the darkness which has covered the earth, and so benighted were the minds of the great mass of the professors of christianity, that those souls who were thus partially enlightened, have generally been stigmatized as heretics, and have suffered great persecutions on account of their faith. And tho such souls, like stars in the night, might shine in the midst of surrounding darkness; yet they could not dispel the darkness, nor enlighten the earth. This remained to be accomplished by the Spirit of Christ in the female. The dawning of the millennial day, and the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, having now commenced, will gradually disperse these clouds of darkness, and open the eyes of a benighted world; and then will the lost state of man be fully displayed in its true colors.

In those parts of the sacred scriptures which relate to the work of the latter day, we find many figurative and prophetic allusions to two correspondent powers which are united to accomplish the same purpose; and the number *two* is represented in various figures

which evidently point to the two first pillars of the church of Christ, and to the united influence of the male and female in the work of redemption. Such are the *two cherubims*, whose wings covered the mercy-seat above the ark;* the *two tables* of the covenant;† the *two silver trumpets*;‡ the *two olive-trees*; the *two olive-branches*; the *two golden pipes* through which the two olive-branches emptied the golden oil out of themselves, and "the *two Anointed Ones* which stand by the Lord of the whole earth;"|| and many others which might be mentioned.

The two cherubims placed over the ark that contained the two tables of the covenant, were very remarkable types of "the two Anointed Ones," the male and the female, who were both united in the work of redemption; "and the council of peace is *between them both*." Over the ark was placed the mercy-seat of pure gold; and the two cherubims of gold, of beaten work, were placed on the ends of the mercy-seat; and their wings were extended on high, so that they covered the mercy-seat with their wings; and their faces looked towards each other, and towards the mercy-seat. These figures are so plain and obvious that it seems as tho they could not be misunderstood. And the Lord said unto Moses, "Thou shalt put the mercy-seat above upon the ark; and in the "ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And "there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from "above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which "are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give "thee in commandment unto the children of Israel."¶

Here God manifested his mind and will to the people of Israel, from above the mercy-seat, and from between the two cherubims; and here they were to look for the word of God in that dipensation; and hence their addresses to that God who dwelt *between the cherubims*.** A striking figure of the true order of the work of God through the male and female in Christ! Between the two cherubims, was the mercy-seat from whence the law of God was declared; which not only pointed out two gospel dispensations, but also showed, in a figure, that the merciful displays of God's grace, in the last dispensation, would proceed from between the two. And here also was the ark of the testimony, showing that between the two would be found the everlasting testimony of truth, in the day of Christ's second appearing. The *pure gold* evidently pointed to the purity of the gospel; and the *beaten work* alluded to the mortification and sufferings, by which the *two Anointed Ones* were to be prepared for that important work which was to redeem and regenerate a lost world. The *two silver trumpets* were typical of the heralds of Christ, in the male and female,

* Exod. xxv 18 & xxxvii. 7. † Deut ix 15 ‡ Numb x 2.
|| Zech. iv. 11, 12 & 14. ¶ Exod. xxv 21, 22. ** 2 Kings. xix. 15. & Isa. xxxvii. 16.

who were to be sent forth to preach the everlasting gospel, which proceeds from the two Anointed Ones, and which will yet be proclaimed to all nations.

The golden candlestick, in the vision of the prophet Zechariah, represented the revelation of God, in Christ, upon which his church or spiritual house is built. The golden bowl upon the top of the candlestick, with its seven lamps, was an emblem of the true church of Christ, which was to be formed of purified souls, who were purified by the refining work of the gospel, as gold is purified in the furnace. Its being represented by a golden bowl, signified that its formation was to be according to the perfect order of God's workmanship; and it also prefigured the compact and pure union of its members. The two olive-trees, one on each side of it, which supplied the golden bowl with oil, represented the same work and order of God as did the two cherubims, and were declared by the angel to be "the two Anointed Ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth."

As the golden bowl received the golden oil from the two olive-trees; so the church of Christ receives the pure oil of light and life from the trees of life, which are "the two Anointed Ones." These are the male and female in Christ, who are anointed with the Divine Spirit of God, and between whom the gifts and graces of the Spirit flow to the church. And the seven pipes to the seven lamps, by which they were supplied with the oil of light from the two olive-trees, represented the manifestations of the seven Spirits of God, through Christ, to the church. The seven lamps signified the operations of these seven Spirits in the church, by which the church is enlightened with the true light, and by which it becomes the light of the world. These types and figures are plain and significant, and the objects to which they allude are so evident, that they cannot, with any consistency, be any otherwise applied, nor be fulfilled in any other manner than according to the preceding illustration.*

As a further evidence in favor of the manifestation of Christ in the female, we find in the prophet Jeremiah, this testimony: "The "Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, *A woman shall com-* "*pass a man.*"† Many suppose that this alluded to the virgin Mary, as encompassing the man Jesus, who was born of her. But in this sense, every woman who conceives and brings forth a man child, may be said to compass a man; and therefore that is *not* "a new thing in the earth;" of course it cannot be the meaning of the prophecy. This prophecy evidently alluded to the female in whom the second appearance of Christ was to commence: for

* These types and figures certainly represent the order of the spiritual work of God, and if any are disposed to dispute the preceding illustration, it will be incumbent on them to furnish a more rational explanation.

† Jer. xxxi 22.

being endowed with such an extraordinary measure of the Spirit of Christ, she was able to compass and surpass the natural man, with all his wisdom, and all his knowledge and understanding of divine things, and did, in truth, effectually do it.

We have also further evidence from the parables and testimony of Jesus Christ himself, that his second coming would be manifested by the female. "The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain king, who made a marriage for his son."* This parable is so plain and pointed that it cannot be mistaken, nor misapplied without the grossest perversion of language. There can be no marriage without a bridegroom and a bride. In this parable it is generally admitted that Jesus Christ alluded to himself as the Bridegroom; but who is the Bride? It has generally been supposed that the church was alluded to as the Bride; indeed this seems to be the general opinion of expositors. But if the church is to be considered as the Bride, then who are the guests? They must certainly be an assembly of people, male and female, who are invited to the marriage, and have the honor of sitting down to the marriage supper with the Bridegroom and Bride. These evidently constitute the church, which is made up of the faithful, who are called to attend the marriage of the Lamb and Bride. It would be a very singular sort of marriage for the bridegroom, instead of taking a chosen female for his bride, to take all his guests, both male and female, and call them the bride. If this be the true meaning of the parable, then the figure, by which Jesus Christ chose to represent his marriage, does not agree with the substance, and was therefore very improperly chosen. The figure, in this sense, would be much more complete in its order, than the substance which it was chosen to represent.

The parable of the wise and foolish virgins, which also alludes to the same subject, is very plain and pointed.† No one can reasonably dispute that these virgins were designed to represent the wise and foolish professors of christianity. Nor will any one be at a loss to know who is meant by the Bridegroom. But where is the Bride? She must evidently be a distinct character from the ten virgins. Who then is she? A bridegroom necessarily supposes a bride also, whether she be mentioned or not; it would therefore be very inconsistent to call the Lord Jesus a Bridegroom, without admitting him to have a Bride: "For the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."‡ But if the church is to be considered as the Bride, then who are the great multitude that rejoice because the marriage of the Lamb is come? Again: "Blessed are they who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb." These are they that rejoice; and these are evidently the church, distinct from the Bride.

* Matt. xxii. 2. † See Matt. xxv. 1. ‡ Rev. xix. 7 & 9.

It is not to be denied that the prophets and apostles often spoke of the church in the feminine gender, and they sometimes spoke of the church as being married to Christ. Thus saith the apostle Paul to the Corinthians; "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."* But the time for the Bride to be revealed had not then arrived; and therefore she was often spoken of in a figurative sense. The church was the body of Christ: and as Adam had a body containing the substance of male and female, before Eve was taken from it; so had Christ. Therefore as Christ had then been manifested in the male only, and not in the female, the apostles were under the necessity of speaking as they did, and they could not in truth speak otherwise, till the female was taken from his body, and placed in her proper order, as a distinct character. But the time is now arrived, and the female is made manifest; therefore it is no longer necessary to use figurative language in speaking of these things: for we can now plainly declare the Spirit and the Bride.

"The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that hear-"eth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come; and whoso-"ever will, let him take of the water of life freely."† Here the Spirit and the Bride are first distinctly mentioned as inviting souls to come to the fountain of life, and partake of its waters. Should it still be contended that by *the Bride*, is here meant *the church*, we would ask, who then are those that hear? "Let him that hear-eth say, Come." This alludes to a character of people already called, expressly distinct from the Spirit and the Bride, and who are called upon to invite souls to come, and evidently applies to the church. The voice of the Spirit and the Bride is to the church. The church heareth, and having received the Spirit of the "two Anointed Ones," is therefore ready to declare the same call of the gospel to other souls, who are hungering and thirsting after righteousness. "Let him that is athirst, come; and whosoever will;" let all the lost children of men, who feel their loss, and are willing to accept the offers of the gospel, come and "take the water of life freely."

CHAPTER V.

Spiritual Regeneration and the New Birth.

REGENERATION, in its general sense, signifies a renovation or forming anew that which had been previously formed. Sometimes it is used merely to imply the restoration of any thing to a state from which it had fallen by corruption, decay or some other means; sometimes it signifies a renewing of the original principles of the

* 2 Cor. xi. 2. † Rev. xxii. 17.

old, and establishing them upon a different foundation. And it is generally expected that the new, being built upon the improvements of time and experience, will be superior to the old. But when we speak of spiritual regeneration, as applied to mankind, we mean, not merely a restoration to the state of innocence in which man was first created;* but a renovation of the whole soul and life of the man, in such a manner as to raise him, not only from the state into which he is fallen, but into a life of righteousness and true holiness, far superior to his primitive state, even into a state of eternal life, from which he never can fall.

As the act of generation, and the bringing forth of a natural offspring, are two different and distinct operations, and the former necessarily precedes the latter; so it is in spiritual regeneration and the new birth. The child of God must be begotten in the spirit, by the word of life, and travel in the spiritual regeneration, till he comes to the new birth, before he can be born into the real nature and life of Christ. This work first began in Jesus Christ; and no one was ever born out of the flesh, into the Kingdom of Heaven before him.

The patriarchs and prophets, previous to the coming of Christ, were moved by the Holy Spirit, as a spirit of prophecy, which testified of the coming of Christ in the flesh, in a future day, to raise man out of the nature of the flesh, into the nature of the Spirit. But this Spirit did not take up its abode in any; so as to become the divine life of the soul, and direct all its faculties; therefore none of them were raised out of the nature of the flesh, but they all still remained natural people. Nevertheless, they were accepted of God, according to the work of that day, in living up to their best light; and when they had done with time, they slept with their fathers, were gathered to their own people, and rested in peace. Thus they were "taken away from the evil to come."† Or as the apostle expresses it, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them." And again: "These all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."‡

It appears to be a prevailing opinion, that those who died in faith, before the coming of Christ, were immediately received into Heaven. If this be so, they must have received the promise, which is contrary to the express declaration of the apostle, just quoted. And Jesus himself hath also declared that, "No man hath ascended up to Heaven, but he that came down from Hea-

* If this were all that man could gain by regeneration, he would be equally liable to fall again, and of course would never be out of danger.

† See Isa. lvii. 1. ‡ Heb. xi. 13, 39, 40.

"ven, even the Son of man which is in Heaven."* Whatever doctrines may be taught to the contrary, it appears evident from the preceding testimonies, that all who lived before the coming of Christ, were waiting for the fulfilment of the promises, and expected the way into Heaven to be opened by Christ, and that none of all the human race could enter there, until he had first opened the way. The apostle understood this: speaking of the entrance of the high priest, once a year, into the most holy place, he saith "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of "all, was not yet made manifest."† If, therefore, the way into the holy place was not then made manifest, it is certain that no one could have entered into it.

Here the question will probably be asked, What then became of those who died in faith, if they did not go to Heaven? Surely you will not say, they went to hell? By no means. As before observed, they were gathered to their people, and rested in peace "each one walking in his uprightness."‡ But where was their resting place? and where did they walk in their uprightness? If they neither went to heaven nor hell, and yet walked in their uprightness, they must have been some where.

The opinion which generally prevails, concerning the spiritual world, even among those who call themselves christians, seems to be confined to a heaven and a hell, both of which they imagine to be materiate places, fixed at an immense distance from this world and from each other. They also suppose that when a soul leaves the body, it goes immediately to heaven or hell; and that there is no other place for the habitation of souls: consequently, that immense space between them must be a perfect void. These erroneous ideas evidently proceed from the want of spiritual light, and the prejudice of education. "Thus saith the Lord, Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool."|| Hence the place between them cannot be a void.

The connexion between the temporal and spiritual world, is like that of soul and body. Man, being composed of the natural elements, is the offspring of the world in its highest degree of perfection; the spiritual and temporal parts being united in him, he comes forth with a soul and body, and thereby shows the order from whence he proceeded. When a soul leaves the body, being still a living and conscious being, it moves in the elements of the spiritual world, while the body, being dead, soon dissolves and mingles again with the elements of the temporal world.

The distance between God and man, and between heaven and hell, is not measured by space, as we measure distances on earth. The fulness of Heaven itself, is a state of perfect separation from all evil, and contains the highest perfection of order, glory and

* John iii. 13. † Heb. ix. 8. ‡ Isa. lvii. 2. || Isa. lxvi. 1.

happiness. Hell, in its fulness, is a state of entire separation from all good, and the source of all evil, disorder and confusion; and hence it forms a situation of the most awful and excessive horror and misery. Between these two, there is an infinity of different states and situations of souls, both in the body and out of it, each containing different degrees of good or evil, according to their good or evil works. And hence it is, that, as the soul is the real acting principle in man; so when souls leave the body, and are waked up to see and feel their real situation in the world of spirits, they find their reward to be according as their works have been in this world. Man, in his natural state, is under the vail of the flesh, which shuts him from a real view of either heaven or hell. His nearness to hell is measured by the proportion of evil which exists and reigns in him; his nearness to heaven, by the proportion of good which he has attained, and which has become a ruling principle in his soul.

Hence those who were faithful to the light of God before Christ appeared, in whatever degree that light was given them, were accounted righteous, and were so far governed by heavenly influences; and hence they felt peace; and when they left this world, they rested in that peace which they had obtained by their obedience. But they could not enter into the heavenly state; because the way was not then opened by which they could travel out of the life of nature, by regeneration, and be born into a heavenly and eternal life. And the way could not be opened until sufficient power was manifested in fallen nature, to raise souls out of the life of that nature, into a heavenly life. This never took place until it was manifested in the person of Jesus.

A man must be born into this natural world, of the substance of natural life, before he can become a living being in this world; and being so born, he becomes a natural man, soul and body, and must forever remain in a state of nature, unless he can be born again: for unless his soul can be born into the heavenly world, of the substance of eternal life, he never can become a living being in that world. Mankind being in a natural state, and being lost from God, it is evident that they had not eternal life in them. Christ was therefore sent as a Redeemer, to redeem them from their lost state, and fit them for the "new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," which God had promised by the mouth of the prophet Isaiah.* This work is to be effected by regeneration, and by this means eternal life is administered to man; and it is impossible that the work should ever be effected, or that eternal life should ever be obtained in any other way.

Tho Jesus Christ had a miraculous birth, yet "he took not on "him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abra-

* See Isa. lxv. 17. and lxvi. 22. also 2 Pet. iii. 13.

"ham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like "unto his brethren."* Hence it appears that nothing was except ed, not even the death of the fall. It is therefore evident that h was born into a fallen nature, with all its propensities. This na ture he received, through the medium of his natural birth, of th Virgin Mary; therefore he necessarily had a progressive travel ou of it. And by yielding obedience to the will of his heavenly Pa rents, he overcame the power of that death which reigned in th fallen nature of man, and rose triumphant out of it; and was thu formed into the very nature of eternal life, the elements of whic he had received from his Eternal Parents. Thus he was "th "first begotten from the dead, and the firstborn among many "brethren."†

Hence it is evident that the work of regeneration first commenc ed in him: for if any one had ever been born into eternal life be fore Jesus Christ came into the world, and passed through the new birth, he could not have been the firstborn. Therefore he wa evidently the beginning of the new and eternal creation of God Having gained eternal life in himself, he could, through a prope medium, transmit that life to Adam's posterity. "For as th "Father hath life in himself, so he hath given to the Son to hav "life in himself."‡

The new birth was not even taught before Christ was manifest ed in the flesh, in the person of Jesus; and Jesus having been th first who travelled in the regeneration and received the spiritua birth, he was the first to teach it to others. He was the first wh said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom o God."‖ This was a matter of great wonder to Nicodemus; an this spiritual birth has always been a mystery to the natural man and must always remain so, until he becomes enlightened, by th true light, to see the operations of the Spirit of God: for as h sense is natural, he may hear of such a work as being born again but it is to him like the sound of the wind, "he cannot tell whenc it cometh nor whither it goeth." And tho modern christians pro fess full faith in it; yet it appears that even their most learned d vines, so called, are as insensible of the nature of it, and the man ner in which it is to be effected as Nicodemus was. Hence it that they consider the work of generation and regeneration as b no means inconsistent with each other; or in other words, that man may be regenerated and born of God, and yet be as activel concerned in the work of natural generation afterwards as befor

They seem to be ignorant that those who are born by the Spir of Christ, through the process of regeneration, are born out of th nature of the flesh, and therefore become entirely dead to gener tion; and hence also it is, that they blend the regeneration an

* Heb. ii 16, 17. † Rev. i. 5 & Rom. viii. 29. ‡ John v. 26. ‖ John iii. 3.

the new birth into one and the same thing, and call it an instantaneous work. But we would ask, Where then, is the resemblance between this kind of spiritual conception and birth, and that which is natural, and which is a figure of it? We might, with equal propriety, suppose the natural conception, travail and birth to be one and the same thing, and call that an instantaneous work, while all the productions of the natural world teach us the contrary. But as the natural conception, or planting the seed of natural life, and the birth of natural offspring, are operations entirely distinct from each other; and as the travail of generation commences with the former, and is completed in the latter; so is the planting of the seed of eternal life in the soul; and so is the travail of the regeneration and the spiritual birth, which are truly prefigured by the natural.

According to the testimony of St. John, "Whosoever is born of "God, sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God, keepeth him-"self, and that wicked one toucheth him not."* Hence it appears evident that, in the regeneration, a man must be both begotten and born: of course there must necessarily be a spiritual father and mother in the work of regeneration, as really as a natural father and mother in the work of generation. And as it is by natural generation that the kingdoms of this world have been peopled by a race of natural men and women; so it is by spiritual regeneration that the Kingdom of Heaven must be peopled by a race of spiritual men and women. And as the natural offspring of the first Adam and Eve have received the nature of the *wicked one*, through the corporeal union of their earthly parents, in the work of generation; so the spiritual offspring of the second Adam and Eve must receive the nature of the *Holy One*, through the spiritual union of their heavenly parents, in the work of regeneration.

But the work of generation, being corrupted by the fall, must be put away, and cease in man, before the work of regeneration can have any salutary effect upon the soul: for souls must be born out of the nature of the flesh, in order to be born into the nature of the Spirit. "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit."† That which is born of the flesh, is subject to death and all the deplorable effects of the fall; but that which is born of the Spirit, is born into eternal life, and can neither die nor fall. Therefore, when souls are really born of God, they become the offspring of eternal life; and it is then impossible that they should ever beget a natural posterity: for being in eternal life, and having the power of eternal life in themselves, their offspring, if they ever have any, must also be born into eternal life, and therefore can never die nor fall. If therefore, those who profess to be born of God, do beget a natural offspring, sub-

* 1 John v. 18. † John iii. 6.

ject to death and the fall, it is a decisive proof that they are *not* born of God, but are still a natural people, still in the flesh, and under the fall, notwithstanding all their professions.

It is a truth generally acknowledged, that the secret influence of the serpent, which first occasioned man's fall, found its entrance into human nature, through the female. And it is equally true, that the very foundation of man's loss centers in the work of carnal coition. Hence all mankind are brought into the world in a fallen state, by the female, through the agency of this work. It was therefore indispensibly necessary, for the final restoration of man to eternal life, that the Spirit of Christ should be revealed in that sex where sin first began; and there destroy that enchanting influence which the woman received from the serpent, that alluring power by which the natural man is led, and through which the fall of man was first produced.

By thus raising the female from the lowest state of the fall, and purifying her from all its baleful corruptions, she is made a fit temple for the Holy Spirit to dwell in. And being divested of that enchanting power, so alluring to the carnal lover, she becomes an amiable pattern of Divine love, unmixed with the deceitful blandishments of sensual desire, and is able to bring forth the true spiritual seed of the new and spiritual creation. Thus a foundation is laid to undermine the power and influence of the serpent in the human race; and thereby the true seed is brought forth which raises man from the union and relation of a carnal nature, into the very nature and spiritual union of Christ.

By this means the root of human depravity is destroyed and rooted out of the very soil where it was first planted; and this could never have been done without the manifestation of Christ in the female, where the evil seed was first sown. For if the Spirit of Christ could not have descended to the lowest depth of man's loss, even to the depth of Satan's power and influence in mankind then the evil seed must still have been below the reach of Christ and therefore it could never be eradicated, and consequently the redemption of mankind could never be accomplished.

Again; it must appear obvious, that if Divine Wisdom had designed that Christ should ever be manifested in the female sex for the purpose of raising them to their proper order in the work of redemption, (which none can reasonably dispute,) there must be a beginning; and this manifestation must first commence in one woman, and from her be extended to others; and it must necessarily appear and be confirmed to others, by the fruits and works brought forth by her. As the true character of Christ in the male was first manifested in Jesus; so the true character of Christ in the female, must first be manifested in that female who first received the fulness of the same Spirit. And as this correspondent charac-

ter was never displayed in any woman, until it was manifested in Ann Lee; therefore she must be that distinguished female who was selected by Divine Wisdom for that very purpose.

The true foundation being thus laid, in both the male and the female, the work of God proceeds by a corresponding spiritual union and relation between them, through which souls are regenerated, and born into the everlasting Kingdom of Christ. And without this correspondence, the work of the new creation could not proceed, any more than the work of the old creation could go on without a natural correspondence between the male and female. Hence it appears evident, that the work of regeneration and the new birth could not be accomplished until the second appearing of Christ.

But so far as the apostles and primitive christians, who received the testimony of Christ, were separated from the course of the world, they were gathered, by his Spirit, into a work of renovation, and were formed into a united body, in which the Holy Spirit dwelt, as "the Comforter," to lead and guide them in the truth, agreeable to the promise of Christ to his disciples.* Yet no member of that body was really born into the elements of eternal life, so as to become a being with eternal life in himself. The primitive christians were therefore moved by the Holy Spirit, as an abiding Spirit of promise, and an earnest of the new birth, to be accomplished in a future day. If this were not the case, why did the apostle say, "The earnest expectation of the creature, waiteth "for the manifestation of the sons of God: and not only they, but "ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we "ourselves, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to "wit, the redemption of our body."†

By the expression, *our body*, he alluded to the body of the faithful, of which the apostles were members. Again he saith, "We are saved by hope. But hope that is seen is not hope: for "what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope "for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."‡ Thus it appears that none, in that day, had attained to the fulness of redemption and the new birth; but they were waiting with patience for its accomplishment. For had they received it, they would not have been waiting in hope, for that which they did not see. Hence it is evident that the apostle did not expect the accomplishment of it in that day.

The work of Christ's first appearing, was to establish the principles of the new and spiritual creation; to separate between the true spiritual light, and spiritual darkness; and between the spiritual and natural elements; to form the ground or soil, for the growth of the spiritual seed. By this he laid the foundation of the

* See John xvi. 7 & 13. † Rom. viii. 19 & 23. ‡ See verse 24 & 25.

"new heavens and the new earth," which are the principles of righteousness, and in which is the seed of eternal life, by which souls are to be created anew, through Christ, into an eternal and immortal state. Thus he prepared, and set in order, eternal mansions, where souls could be gathered and placed in their proper order, in his everlasting Kingdom. For he saith, "I go to prepare "a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I "will come again, and receive you to myself; that where I am, "there ye may be also."* Here he evidently alluded to the time of his second coming.

The operation produced by seed sown in the earth, and the change effected, before ripe fruit can be brought forth, is a figure of the work of regeneration. Seed sown in the earth, must die before it can bring forth fruit; but being quickened, and properly nourished by the natural elements, it springs up, grows and produces fruit,† which, when ripe, is gathered; but the stalk that bore it is left in the earth: hence it is only the life of the seed which is brought forth in the fruit.

So the natural man, when sown in the gospel field, must die to that which is natural and earthly, before he can rise into the life of Christ. This death is effected by the operation of the seed of eternal life, by which his soul is begotten in the work of the regeneration. And this seed of eternal life, being properly nourished by the spiritual elements, springs up and grows, and gathers the spiritual part of the man, which is the life of his soul, into its own nature, and changes the life of the soul from that which is natural and earthly, to that which is spiritual and heavenly. Thus it raises the soul out of the elements of an earthly nature, and leaves them behind, like the withered and dead stalk and root. And thus ripe fruit is brought forth, which is not natural and earthly, but spiritual, heavenly and eternal. And herein are Christ's words fulfilled; "Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the "same shall save it."‡

Tho the primitive christians received the faith of Christ, and were gathered into the principles of the spiritual work of God; yet they were not brought forth as ripe fruit in that day. They were figuratively like seed sown in autumn, which, tho it springs up, and gives an earnest of future fruit; yet it cannot bring forth ripe grain in that season; but during the winter, it lies hid in the earth, and appears as tho it were dead. But when returning spring appears, the living plant, being quickened by the enlivening rays of the sun, and properly nourished by the natural elements, and the refreshing showers and dews of the natural heavens, it springs up again and grows; and after passing through the various operations of vegetation, it brings forth ripe grain.

*John xiv. 2, 3. † See John xii. 24. ‡ Mark viii. 35.

Thus it was with those who were planted in the gospel field, in the first appearing of Christ. A long and dreary spiritual winter ensued, and according to the prediction of Jesus Christ, "iniquity abounded, and the love of many waxed cold."* This was the effect of the long, gloomy and deplorable reign of Antichrist, which naturally produced a spiritual winter. In consequence of this, the spiritual seed, which had sprung up in the primitive church, was hid in the earth and could not grow. But when the second appearing of Christ commenced, it was like returning spring. The spiritual seed, being quickened by the divine influences of the Sun of righteousness, and nourished by the refreshing showers and dews of the "new heavens," began to spring up and grow, and bring forth fruit.

It appears evident from the uniform tenor of the discourses of Jesus and his apostles on this subject, that they did not expect the work of full redemption to be accomplished until Christ's second appearing: for they frequently exhorted the people to look and wait for the coming of the Lord. Jesus himself, when speaking to his disciples of the signs that should precede the coming of the Son of man, said, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look "up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."† This is not only a proof that their redemption had not been before obtained, but that all those extraordinary signs, of which he had spoken, must appear before they could even look for its near approach.

It is not disputed that the apostles sometimes spoke of the new birth, and of being born of God, and described the character of such as receive this birth. But it ought to be considered, in the first place, that it is usual in the language of revelation, to speak of future events as tho they were present. And secondly, that the apostles spake and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, which they had received as a spirit of promise, and which bore witness, in them, of its future work, of bringing forth souls to God, in the very essence of eternal life. And it is evident from the testimony of St. John, who spake more concerning the new birth than the other apostles, that they did not receive the accomplishment of it in that day; but considered it a work to be fulfilled, in them, in a future day. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; "and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that "when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see "him as he is."‡ But if they had been born of God, this matter would have appeared very plain to them. Hence it also appears that he did not expect the full manifestation of this work, until the second appearing of Christ. But he evidently shows, as did St.

* See Matt. xxiv. 12. † Luke xxi 28 ‡ 1 John iii. 2.

Paul also, that they "knew in part, and prophesied in part."* Consequently they could but in part see the work of regeneration.

But it may be asked, How then were they the sons of God? We answer; By adoption. "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption." And again: "That we might receive the adoption of sons."† But if they were the real sons of God, where was the necessity of adoption? The reality was evidently designed to take place in a future day, when the manifestation of Christ should appear in the order of the female, as the Mother Spirit, to bear souls to God; and being already the sons of God by adoption, they would then be brought forth as the real children of God. And this was the work for which they were waiting.

It may be proper to remark here, that if souls can be regenerated and born of God, agreeable to the common opinion of modern christians, without a complete renovation of the whole soul, from the life of Adam to the life of Christ, and without the united influence of spiritual parents, in the order of male and female; then the laws of regeneration must not only be at variance with all the rest of God's works, but they must also be very deficient and imperfect in their order, having no relative connexion with the order of the natural creation in any of its productions. In this case, the productions of the natural creation, and the birth of natural offspring, which are but merely temporal, must be more perfect, in their order, than those of heavenly birth, which are spiritual and eternal. This is making the figure more perfect than the substance: for natural generation, which is but a figure of spiritual regeneration, is effected by the united operations of male and female.

But if spiritual regeneration and the new birth, is the work of a father only, then the female is entirely excluded from any part in it; consequently no woman can ever enter the Kingdom of Heaven. How then is the regeneration to be perfected? and how are souls to be brought to the birth? According to this doctrine, the natural birth, as a figure of the spiritual, is very improperly chosen; in truth it can be no figure at all. Therefore, admitting the common opinion of the new birth, it must be a mere speculative and imaginary thing, and can have no foundation in the established order of God's works.

But we admit that there is this difference between the work of generation and regeneration: as the former is natural in all its operations; so the latter, in all its operations, is spiritual. By the former, a conscious being is brought into natural existence, who had no agency or will in the work; by the latter, this conscious being is brought into a spiritual and eternal existence. And as the work is wrought upon the soul of a conscious being, it cannot be accomplished without the free agency and willing obedience of that soul.

* See 1 Cor xiii. 9. † See Rom viii 15 and Gal. iv. 5.

The primitive christians, who were faithful according to the work of their day, and gave up their lives for their testimony, "rested in peace, and walked in their uprightness," and were sheltered from the corruptions, storms and distresses which prevailed in Antichrist's kingdom. But they were placed "under the altar;" which showed that they had a further work to do, and a further sacrifice to make; otherwise they would not have been seen *under the altar.** And tho "white robes were given them;" yet they had still to rest until the time of that dispensation was ended. But when the time arrived for the Bride to be declared, and the marriage of the Lamb took place, then they rose with that *great multitude*, that rejoiced and praised God: because the day of redemption had fully arrived, and that spiritual union, by which the new birth could be fully effected, was now made manifest. Therefore they could now be brought forth, each one, as it were, a ripe grain, endowed with the very life of Christ. And now they were able to come into their proper lot and order, in the everlasting Kingdom of Christ.

This great spiritual work has now commenced. And as grain that is sown in the spring, if properly nourished by the natural elements, springs up, grows and brings forth fruit in the same season, without passing through the chilling blasts of winter; so all souls, who are partakers of the work of this great day, will be nourished by the spiritual elements of eternal life, and will grow into the very nature of Christ, and bring forth the precious fruits of the gospel, without being exposed to those chilling blasts of ecclesiastical tyranny which once bound the heavens and earth in a spiritual winter. Those gloomy clouds of religious intolerance, and pelting storms of persecution, which once deformed the heavenly atmosphere, and deluged the earth with blood, are now blown away; and the cheering spring of Christ's second appearance is now made manifest, and will extend from clime to clime, and from shore to shore, until "all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of the Lord;" and all shall have an opportunity to come into its work, and enjoy its blessings, to their eternal glory; or to reject it to their everlasting destruction.

CHAPTER VI.

Concerning Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

BAPTISM and the Lord's supper have, for many ages, been considered by the great body of professing christians, as institutions of Divine appointment, and necessary to be observed as distinguishing ceremonies of the christian religion. They are denominated

* See Rev. vi. 9.

"christian sacraments," and are esteemed by many as essential to salvation. We have therefore thought proper to treat of them in a separate chapter, and to make such remarks upon them as we trust will lead the candid and unbiassed mind to view them in their true light.

The many different opinions and jarring contentions that have long existed among the professors of christianity, concerning these two ceremonies, are so many evidences that their most strenuous votaries have fixed their views on mere shadows and signs, instead of embracing the real spirit and substance of Divine life to which they alluded. The great importance which has long been attached to the external performance of these ceremonies, and the ages of contention which have darkened and bewildered the world on these subjects, first originated in antichristian darkness, after the church had lost the real knowledge of the true spiritual work of God. We shall therefore proceed to speak of these two subjects separately.

First, *Concerning Baptism.* That the true principle of baptism is a divine institution, and essentially necessary to salvation, is indisputable: for, according to the express declaration of Jesus Christ, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."* Yet a man may believe that Jesus Christ came into the world, and was crucified and died on Mount Calvary for sinners, and may also be baptized with water, and still be utterly destitute of the true faith and principles of the gospel; and therefore be as far from following Christ in a life of righteousness, as those who never heard his name. And as such a one gives no evidence of his having received the promise of salvation, it must appear obvious that, notwithstanding his water-baptism, he has not received the true baptism of Christ.

It is worthy of remark, that in all the instructions of Jesus to his disciples, he never once directed them to baptize with water: hence it is evident that he did not require it of them. The baptism of Christ is not the baptism of water, but of the Holy Spirit. And does it appear reasonable to suppose that he would send his disciples to baptize with John's baptism, and not with his own? "Ye "shall indeed drink of my cup," said he, "and be baptized with "the baptism that I am baptized with."† Surely he could have no reference to water-baptism; for these disciples had doubtless been baptized with water already. Again he said, "John indeed bap- "tized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost."‡

* Mark xvi. 16 † Matt xx 23.

‡ Acts i. 5, and xi, 16. Many indeed admit a difference between the baptism of John, and that of Christ; but seem to suppose that the only essential difference consists in the different character and calling of each, and suppose that the common element of water was made use of in both cases; but that the baptism of Christ was administered "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost." As to the controversies which have long existed, with respect to the mode of administration, whether it should be done by dipping or sprinkling, they are contentions about names and figures, just like all other contentions in Antichrist's kingdom; while they quarrel about the shadow, they overlook the substance.

Thus it appears evident that the true baptism of Christ, is a spiritual work, of which John's baptism was but a figure. As water washes and cleanses the body from outward pollutions; so the true baptism of the water of life washes and cleanses the soul from all the pollutions of sin. It is a purifying operation of the elements of the Holy Spirit, which must run through the whole travel of the believer, unto perfect sanctification, cleansing the soul from an evil conscience, and from all corrupt propensities: "Having our "hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed "with pure water;" even the water of life."*

By this washing and cleansing, faithful believers are gradually baptized into the *one body of Christ*, where the Spirit of Christ becomes their life, and rules and reigns in them: for there is "One Lord, one faith, and one baptism."† If there is but *one* baptism pertaining to the true christian faith, there certainly cannot be *two*. Which then is it? Is it the baptism of natural water, or of the water of life from the Holy Spirit? The apostle has clearly decided this question: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized "into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free, "and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.—Now the Lord "is that Spirit."‡ The testimony of John the Baptist is also plain and decisive: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; "but he that cometh after me, is mightier than I, whose shoes I "am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy "Ghost and fire."‖ Thus it appears that the baptism of Christ is the baptism of the Spirit, and not of water.

But it may be urged, that Jesus himself went down into the water and was baptized of John. This is true; and it is equally true that he was circumcised, that he offered sacrifices and kept the law. John came under the law, and the baptism of water was instituted under the law; and as the law was a shadow of good things to come, and not the substance; so John's baptism was a shadow of that baptism which was to be manifested through Christ. Therefore Jesus Christ, previous to the commencement of his ministry, kept the law, and passed through John's baptism; and thereby acknowledged and fulfilled the work of God in the preceding dispensations. This is agreeable to his own testimony: "For verily "I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle "shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."¶ He was indeed the first that ever perfectly kept the law of God. When therefore he had perfectly fulfilled the law, he put an end to all its figurative ceremonies. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."**

* Heb x 22 The apostle evidently alluded to the water of life; for, strictly speaking, no natural water can be called pure; nor can the heart of a living man be sprinkled with it.
† Eph iv. 5 ‡ 1 Cor. xii. 13. & 2 Cor. iii 17 ‖ Matt iii. 11.
¶ Matt. v. 18. ** Rom. x. 4.

As John's baptism was under the dispensation of the law, and was, at most, but a figure or shadow of the true baptism of Christ; therefore, when the baptism of the Holy Ghost was introduced, which was the real baptism of Christ, there could be no further need of the shadow; nor could it be of any possible use to those who understood the substance.

It is not to be denied that the apostles and primitive christians did, in some instances, use water baptism; but it is equally true that they also used circumcision and other Jewish ceremonies.* Paul circumcised Timothy; yet he declared that circumcision was nothing: nay more; "I, Paul, say unto you, that if ye be circum-"cised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify to every "man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law."† That is; if he chuse to depend on the law, he must keep every part of it; but even then, he cannot be benefitted by the privileges of the gospel of Christ; because he has chosen the law and placed his trust in that, and not in the gospel of Christ.

Paul circumcised Timothy to prevent occasion of reproach from the Jews, that his doctrine might thereby be accessible to them. For the same cause he was counselled by the elders at Jerusalem, to purify himself after the manner of the law, and make an offering in the temple. He also baptized a few at Corinth, and thanked God that he had baptized no more, declaring at the same time, that Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.‡ But if water-baptism was really an institution of the gospel, it must have been connected with the preaching of the gospel; why then was he not sent to administer it? But it is clearly evident that he performed these ceremonies to accommodate himself to the state of the people; to become all things to all men, that he might save some.

We are however, very far from condemning water-baptism, or any other religious ceremony which is conscientiously performed, as a religious duty; especially if attended with any beneficial effects in reforming the lives of the persons concerned, and keeping them from the snares of sin. But it often happens that people, under the conviction of sin, will resort to water-baptism and other religious ceremonies, to ease the reproaches of conscience, and then settle down under the cover of some established religious denomination, and soon leaven into the same lifeless state, with a full persuasion that they are now become christians, while the real principles and practice of their lives continue the same as before. Thus they grasp at the shadow, but lose the substance. In such cases, their water-baptism serves only to extinguish the fire of the Spirit which had been burning in their consciences and produced conviction of sin, and which ought to burn till sin is consumed out of

* See Acts xvi. 3. and xxi. 20 to 26. † Gal. v. 2, 3. ‡ See 1 Cor. i. 14 to 17.

the soul. But water-baptism never can wash away sin, nor justify the soul.

But the only true baptism which can profit the soul, is that of "the Holy Ghost and fire." This baptism will burn up and destroy the base and unclean passions and propensities of man's fallen nature, and thus effectually consume all the dross of the soul; and in this operation it will prepare the soul for the refreshing streams of the waters of life, which will cleanse, purify and invigorate every faculty, and eventually raise the soul into the very nature and heavenly life of Christ. This is the true baptism of Christ; and this baptism renders all shadows and figures entirely useless. When souls partake of this baptism, then they know in truth, what is meant by "the Holy Ghost and fire;" because they experience its salutary and blessed effects.

SECOND, *Concerning the Lord's supper.* As baptism, or the washing with water, was a figure of the true baptism of the Holy Ghost; so that institution which is commonly called, *The Lord's supper*, was also designed as a figure. But what was the import of this figure? As water is used to cleanse and refresh the body; so the water of life will cleanse and refresh the soul: and as bread is used to nourish and strengthen the body; so the bread of life will nourish and strengthen the soul. Those outward ceremonies called baptism and the Lord's supper, which were sometimes used in the days of the apostles, were in substance, practised under the law.* Hence they must be considered as figures or symbols of spiritual substances, which were to take place in a future day.

When Jesus Christ kept the Jewish passover for the last time, he is supposed to have instituted what is called, "the Lord's supper." But it ought to be considered that, in the performance of this ceremony, he officiated in a manner similar to that practised by the head of a Jewish family; and the only alteration that he introduced and directed his disciples to observe, with regard to this feast of the passover, was, that they should do it in remembrance of him. That is; instead of doing it as they had done, in remembrance of their deliverance from their Eyptian bondage; they should do it in remembrance of him who came to deliver them from the bondage of sin, of which their deliverance from Egypt was but a figure. But it appears very evident in each place where this transaction of our Savior is recorded, that it was designed as a figure of a spiritual work to come. The circumstances are particularly stated by Luke.† "And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to 'eat this passover with you before I suffer; for I say unto you, I

* The washing with water was a common ceremony which was strictly enjoined under the law, for the purpose of cleansing the body from various kinds of pollution. And the passover was an institution kept by the Jews in commemoration of the Lord's passing over their houses when he slew the first-born of Egypt, and delivered them from their Egyptian bondage.

† Luke xxii. 7 to 20.

"will not any more eat thereof, *until it be fulfilled in the King-*
"*dom of God.*"

The church, or assembly of the faithful, established by the apostles at Jerusalem, "were of one heart and one soul;" and we have no account that they ever kept any external sacrament, as the Lord's supper, in any other manner than by eating and drinking together, daily, as Jesus Christ set them the example while he was with them. "And all that believed were together, and had all "things common:—and breaking bread from house to house, did "eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart."* It is true that when the gospel was preached to the Gentiles, those who believed did not generally come into a united interest; and therefore could not eat and drink together, daily; hence they came together at appointed times, and held their love feasts, and eat and drank together, in remembrance of the last supper of the Lord Jesus with his disciples. But as they soon fell into disorder in these things, the apostle Paul interfered, and set proper regulations among them, and said, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup ye do shew the Lord's death till he come."†

Hence it appears that, tho it might be done to commemorate the Lord's death; yet after the second coming of Christ, it could no longer be necessary; because the reality must then be made manifest. But where can we find any evidence to show, that the apostles and primitive christians ever pretended to a ceremonious consecration of a little bread and wine, and to make a formal distribution of it among the members of the church, and call it *the sacrament of the Lord's supper?* This practice was first introduced into the church by Gentile philosophers, who professed the christian faith, and whose object was, (as Dr. Mosheim says, "to give their religion a mystic air, in order to put it upon an equal "footing, in point of dignity, with that of the pagans."‡ This was undoubtedly the origin of all those ideas of the mysterious virtues which have ever been attached to that ceremony.

It is however certain, that if the bread and wine in this ceremony, are to be considered as symbols of the body and blood of a dying Savior, they must be symbols of an absent Savior: for there can be no kind of use in representing the Savior by signs and symbols, when he is really present. Wherever Christ has a true church, there he abides, and there is his body and blood. The church of Christ is fed with the bread of life, and refreshed with the water of life; and this is the body and blood of Christ, and these united, become the life of his true followers, and of which they all partake by their union to the body. "If we walk in the "light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another "and the blood of Jesus Christ (that is, his Spirit and life) cleanseth us from all sin."‖

* Acts ii. 44 & 46. † 1 Cor. xi. 26. ‡ See Eccl. Hist vol. i. p. 199. ‖ 1 John i. 7.

Thus the true sacrament of the Lord's supper is found in the spiritual union of the saints, who have fellowship one with another, by walking in the true light which is in Christ; and thus they partake of his Spirit and life, according to his own testimony: "I am "the bread of life—I am the living bread which came down from "Heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever.— "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, "ye have no life in you. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my "blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh "my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."* This is partaking of the Lord's supper in very deed; and they who truly do this, have the promise of eternal life; and none can ever possess eternal life, unless they enjoy this holy communion, and really partake of this food, in its true spiritual sense.

No person can reasonably suppose that Jesus meant that we must literally eat his flesh and drink his blood, in order to obtain eternal life. His language on this occasion, as on many others, was used figuratively, to imply his life and his Spirit. His meaning was, that those who partake of his life and Spirit, will live as he lived, and walk as he walked; that is, in perfect obedience to the will of God. "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me," said he; and that which was his meat, became also the meat of his true followers, who thereby became the members of his body, and were made partakers with him, of the bread of life which was manifested in him. This is the food of heavenly minded souls, and this is the true sacrament, and there is no other. "To him "that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna." And again; "I will not drink henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until "that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom."† This remained to be accomplished at the period of his second coming.

Hence we may see what the true supper of the Lord is; and what his supper with his disciples was designed to typify: and when souls really come to partake of this bread, and drink this wine, they will no longer contend about shadows and signs. Jesus Christ did not say, "Except ye eat *that bread* and drink *that wine*," which is called the Lord's supper, "ye have no life in you." Yet the professors of christianity, who have been so solicitous about the performance of this outward ceremony, instead of commemorating the dying love of the Divine Redeemer, by partaking of his Divine Spirit, and exercising it in love one to another, have manifested the most bitter animosities towards each other.

The violent contentions among christian professors of former ages, upon this subject, instead of promoting brotherly kindness, christian charity and heavenly love, often led to cruel hatred, blood

* John vi. 48 to 56. † Matt. xxvi. 29. and Rev. ii. 17.

and slaughter. No rational christian can suppose that Christ would establish an institution calculated to produce wrath and strife, and that too among christians. And yet the great body of christian professors of the present day, differ very little, in their views of the subject, from their antichristian fathers, who contended with such violence about the shadow, while the real substance was wholly out of their sight. Thus, while those who call themselves christians, still continue to contend about the signs of the body and blood of a Savior, who was crucified on Mount Calvary nearly eighteen hundred years ago, they are witnesses against themselves, that the body and blood of a present Savior is not with them.

But we would ask those who are so tenacious of the ceremony of the bread and wine, why they have neglected another, which was far more positively enjoined, both by the precept and example of our Savior? While a pompous display is made of the ceremony of the bread and wine, the command to wash one another's feet seems to be wholly disregarded. "Supper being ended, Jesus "rose from the table, and laid aside his garments, and took a tow-"el and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, "and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the "towel wherewith he was girded.—So after he had washed their "feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he "said unto them, Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call "me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, "your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to "wash one another's feet: *for I have given you an exemple, that "ye should do as I have done to you.*"*

What rule of action was ever more positively enjoined upon christians? No exception was made to its literal requirement; and Jesus was evidently the first who introduced it as a Divine command. Nothing was ever so positively enjoined by him, in favor of partaking bread and wine as a sacrament. Jesus said to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." But he never said, If ye do not partake of this bread and wine, ye have no part with me; nor was he the first who introduced it; but as it had been practiced among the Jews, at the feast of the passover, in commemoration of their deliverance from Egypt, he directed his disciples to do it for a different purpose: "This do in remembrance of me." But his command to wash one another's feet, was a new and more particular injunction. Why then is the practice neglected by those who so earnestly contend for the ceremony of the bread and wine? The answer is obvious: The former is too humiliating an exercise, and one in which they cannot display so much pomp and parade, as in eating bread and drinking wine.

The requirements of our Savior were just and reasonable. He

* John xiii 2 to 15.

did not come to teach mere lessons of theory; but to inculcate the principles and practice of virtue. His washing the feet of his disciples, was an example of his humility, kindness and love; and where is the real christian who could follow this example, without possessing a measure of the same virtues?

But we are told by some great and learned expositors, that our Savior did not mean to enjoin a literal performance of this ceremony; and that the disciples knew better than to practice it literally: that is, according to the opinion of these expositors, they knew better than to obey the positive command, or to follow the example of their Lord and Master. But they evidently did practice it; and it was one of those essential virtuous practices which the apostle Paul required of widows, to entitle them to admittance into the joint communion of the church; "*If she have washed the saints' feet;*" not, *if she have partaken of the bread and wine;* this was not essential: for this might be done without giving the least proof of virtuous sincerity. But if the former is not to be literally practiced, why should the latter? It is certain that the washing of one another's feet was literally practiced among the primitive christians; and it was evidently designed, not only as an outward token of the inward principle of humility, kindness and charity, but as a figure of the washing of regeneration, which cleanses the soul from the pollutions of an earthly nature, in which the feet of all natural men walk, before they receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

"A new commandment I give unto you," said Jesus, "That ye "love one another, as I have loved you.—By this shall all men "know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."* Here is a plain and positive command given; and those who faithfully obey this command, cannot live in contention and strife; but will love one another, not in profession and word; but in practical deeds of kindness and charity. This is a plain and visible criterion by which all men may see and know who are the true disciples of Christ. But a great profession of religious love, with all the ceremonies of consecrated bread and wine added to it, without a corresponding practice, is no evidence of discipleship: for such are often as full of contention and strife, as those who make no profession at all.

But the greatest practical evidence of genuine love and disinterested benevolence that can be manifested on earth, is found where all are of one heart and one soul; where the rich and the poor can meet together, and eat and drink at one table, and cheerfully partake of one common blessing and interest, and mutually share in each others comforts and afflictions, both in things spiritual and temporal. Here souls, by eating and drinking together, in christian love and harmony, may daily partake of the Lord's supper,

* John xiii. 34, 35.

according to the manner in which the primitive church partook of it. Here they may show forth the Lord's death, in very deed, by their own example, in showing that he died to a selfish, partial nature; and that they have become partakers of that death, and have consequently risen with him, into that life which the world, with all its professions of religion, have never obtained.

Herein they plainly show to all men, that they are partakers of that real body and blood which is the true life of Christ; and are fed and nourished by the true bread and wine of his spiritual Kingdom. And in them is truly fulfilled the prayer of the Lord Jesus to his heavenly Father; "*that they may be one, even as we are one.*"

PART VI.

The Faith and Principles of the New Creation.

CHAPTER I.

The twelve Foundations of the law of Christ, exemplified in the twelve christian virtues.

The great principles of the gospel, revived and brought to light by Mother Ann, and the succeeding Witnesses, comprise the whole law of Christ, manifested in this day of his second appearing. The true nature and character of God can be known only in his Divine Attributes, which are the *seven Spirits of God*, represented to John by the "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne." These seven Spirits are the only true source of all divine light, knowledge and truth, and the only real foundation of all the works of God revealed to man; and these are manifested in Christ the Lamb of God. By the operation of these seven Spirits, through Christ, the foundation, increase, order, beauty and glory of the *new creation* is formed, brought forth, and manifested to and in man. This brings to light the holy city, *New-Jerusalem*.

"And I John saw the holy city, New-Jerusalem, coming down "from God out of Heaven, having the glory of God: and her light "was like unto a stone most precious."* Herein is represented the true work and glory of God, proceeding from those divine lamps, or seven Spirits of God: and by these the glory of God is brought to light, and his spiritual work made manifest to man.

"And he that sat upon the throne, said, Behold, I make all "things new."† It is by the operation of his Divine Attributes, through Christ, that he creates all things new, and establishes the church of the latter day in all its order and glory. The order of the church on earth, proceeds immediately from that which is in Heaven. Indeed the true church of God on earth, is one with that which is in Heaven; and all who are, in truth, united to that which is on earth, are also united to that which is in Heaven. This is agreeable to the declaration of the apostle to the Hebrews; "Ye "are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, "the Heavenly Jerusalem."

And of the holy city it is said, "The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." The seven Spirits of God were the only lights seen before his throne, and the only sight, power and strength of the Lamb. Nothing therefore existed in this holy city, except what proceeded from these seven Spirits.

"And the city lieth four-square; the length and the breath and the height of it are equal." That is, it is equally perfect on all

* Rev. xxi. 2 & 11. † Rev xxi. 5.

sides. And here it is worthy of particular remark, that all its measures, all its works, fruits, beauty, order and glory have their foundation in the number *twelve*. These represent the twelve heavenly virtues manifested in Christ; and these are the pillars, protection and substance of the new and eternal creation of God, "wherein dwelleth righteousness." They may be denominated and arranged in the following order: *Faith*, *Hope*, *Honesty*, *Continence*, *Innocence*, *Simplicity*, *Meekness*, *Humility*, *Prudence*, *Patience*, *Thankfulness*, and *Charity*.

These twelve virtues, established in the soul, and operating in perfect harmony, form the internal and everlasting law of Christ. All other virtues, gifts and graces are the genuine fruits of these twelve, which are the primary principles of virtue proceeding from the Divine Attributes. And altho there may be different names which imply nearly the same principles; yet names, in themselves considered, are but mere sounds; it is the real spirit and substance of these virtues which constitute the principle. These all proceed directly from the Attributes of God; yet each particular virtue has a certain relative connection with its correspondent attributes, from which it more immediately proceeds.

I. Faith. "Without faith it is impossible to please God." Divine faith is that pure influence proceeding from the eternal source of all good, which plants the seed of God in the soul. And the obedience of faith produces all the virtues of the gospel, "which is the power of God unto salvation." True faith proceeds from the *power* and *light* of God, and stands in connection with all his attributes: "For God who hath commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts."* True faith views every Divine manifestation to the soul in its true light; and believes every promise of God, and every display of his power and goodness to mankind, to be what they really are.

But those who profess faith in the gospel, and who profess to be the followers of Christ; and yet do not believe in all the promises of God, nor in all his declarations through his true witnesses; who do not believe that every work will be brought into judgment, with every secret thing, and that every one will be rewarded *according to his works*; who do not believe that Christ is come to open a way by which souls can be saved from all sin, and that this salvation is really attainable in this life; who do not believe that the gospel is free for all souls without distinction, and will effectually save all who believe and obey it; in short, those who do not believe all these things, are certainly lacking in the true faith of the gospel of Christ, let their professions be what they may. Or if they really possess faith, and yet indulge themselves in any thing which is contrary to their faith; or knowingly neglect any duty

*2 Cor. iv. 6.

which the gospel requires of them, they are disobedient to faith; they are not the faithful followers of Christ; they do not keep the law of Christ, and therefore are not true christians.

II. HOPE. Tho souls may receive the true faith of the gospel; yet without hope, no one would be able to set out in the cross-bearing work which faith unfolds: "For we are saved by hope."* Divine hope is a display of the power and wisdom of God in the soul. Hope "hath respect to the recompense of reward."† It inspires the soul with confidence in the promises of God, that his reward is sure. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."‡ Hope is styled in scripture, "*an anchor of the soul*, both sure and stedfast.—Happy is he "whose hope is in the Lord."

All doubting in the work of God, is contrary to this hope; and therefore contrary to genuine christianity. Those who make a profession of christianity, and, at the same time, distrust the love and goodness of God, or doubt his mercy or his justice, and have not full confidence that the power of God, contained in the gospel, is sufficient to enable them to obey all its requirements, and save them from all sin, and in the end reward them with a crown of everlasting life, without any hinderance of the decrees or foreknowledge of God, or any thing inconsistent with their own free-agency, are without true gospel hope, and therefore are not true christians. If they are ashamed of the testimony of the gospel, or of the works of godliness, in any respect, or do any thing whatever, of which they are ashamed, they act contrary to the divine virtue of hope: for "hope maketh not ashamed."

III. HONESTY. Neither faith nor hope can bring forth good fruit, unless they are received "in an honest and good heart." Agreeable to the testimony of Jesus Christ, those who receive the word of God, which is the seed of faith, "in an honest and good heart, bring forth fruit." So important then is the virtue of honesty or sincerity, (which is essentially the same,) that no one can be benefitted by the gospel, or by any gift of God without it. The virtue of honesty is the operation of the righteousness of God, in man, and plants the principle of uprightness in the soul. "The tabernacle of the upright shall flourish."

The professor of christianity who is not honest and sincere, in all his conduct and conversation, who uses any dissimulation, or seeks to cover any of his conduct, in word or deed, under the cloke of deception, who designedly deviates from the truth, in any respect, and does not honestly do good and shun evil, and conduct himself, in all things, according to his best light and understanding, transgresses the divine principle of honesty, and sins against God; and therefore cannot bring forth the fruits of the gospel. The gift

* Rom. viii. 24. † See Heb. xi. 26. ‡ 1 John iii. 3.

of God can find no abiding place in such a soul: for God is a God of truth, and no hypocrisy can find acceptance in his presence. "The hope of the hypocrite shall perish."

IV. CONTINENCE. This is the fruit of that seed sown by faith, and nourished by hope, in the good and honest heart. It is the principle of self-denial and abstinence from all evil; the source of seclusion or separation from the principles and practices of the world; and the spring from whence proceeds the virgin life. It is a chaste and pure principle, and flows from the holiness of God. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

He who, under a profession of christianity, indulges a lascivious propensity, in actions, words or feelings; he who does not take up his cross against all impurity, according to the requirements of the gospel; but who indulges himself in any thing whatever, that has a tendency to lead the mind from the pure work of God, and to attach it to the impure things of this world, violates the virtue of continence, defiles his soul and dishonors his christian profession; and therefore he is not a true self-denying christian.

V. INNOCENCE. This is the handmaid of *Continence*, and, like that, proceeds from holiness. The operation of continence destroys all fleshly lust, and implants in the soul the virtue of innocence. Thus the soul is fitted for the Kingdom of Heaven, and for the acceptable worship of God. "I will wash my hands in innocency; so will I compass thine altar, O Lord!" said the Psalmist.* And, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven;" said Jesus.† Little children are innocent; their souls are not defiled with any known sin; they know nothing of the nature of pride, lust or any evil; they feel dependent on their parents for protection and support.

Hence it must appear plain and obvious, that professors of the christian religion, who do not become as little children, by living lives of innocence, and feel their daily dependence on the gift of God, for spiritual nourishment, strength and support, and for continual direction in the line of their duty, can have no just title to the Kingdom of Heaven, and need not expect to enter therein. Those who indulge, in themselves, any feelings of lust, pride, envy, covetousness, malice, hatred or revenge, are not innocent before God; they can bring no acceptable sacrifice to his altar; they are not the humble followers of the innocent, meek and lowly Savior: therefore they are not true christians; and their profession will only increase their condemnation in the day of trial.

VI. SIMPLICITY. True gospel simplicity implies a godly sincerity, and a real singleness of heart, in all our conversation and conduct. This virtue is the operation of holiness and goodness

* Psa. xxvi. 6. † Matt. xviii. 3.

and produces in the soul a perfect oneness of character, in all things; its thoughts, words and works are plain and simple, and wholly directed to the honor and glory of God. It is harmless and undefiled, and wholly unmixed with any evil. It is without ostentation, parade or any vain show, and naturally leads to plainness in all things. In all the objects of its pursuit, in all the exercise of its powers, in all its communications of good to others, it is governed solely by the will of God, and shows forth its peculiar singleness of heart and mind in all things. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

Hence it will readily appear, that a professor of christianity must be greatly deficient in true gospel simplicity, however great his profession, whose heart is not single towards God, whose faith is corrupted with a mixture of pride and vain glory, whose conversation is mixed with duplicity, and his conduct with craftiness, whose mind is filled with jarring passions, and continually exercised with vain imaginations. Such professors do not live simply according to the faith of the pure gospel of Christ; they do not seek to do the will of God, and live to his honor and glory in all things; they do not honor their profession; they do not follow Christ, nor bear his cross; they do not walk in christian simplicity. How then can they, with any propriety, be called christians?

VII. MEEKNESS. This is that mild, gentle and unassuming virtue which is the very opposite of pride and haughtiness. Pride separates the soul from obedience to God; but meekness readily leads to obedience. Meekness fits the soul for that gospel soil in which it may bring forth fruit unto godliness. "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." This alludes to the "new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," and which is composed of that spiritual soil in which souls can "take root downward, and bear fruit upward." True meekness is the fear of God, the beginning of wisdom and gospel understanding. It implants in the soul a lively sense of the greatness of God's power, and the dependence of the soul upon him for every good gift.

Many make great professions of religion who are, at the same time, utterly destitute of the virtue of meekness: hence their religion is but a name without the substance. He who is not mild, "gentle, and easy to be entreated," is lacking in meekness. He who pursues projects of ambition, or seeks after worldly greatness, in any manner, transgresses against the virtue of meekness. He can therefore have no just claim to christianity; he cannot inherit the new earth, nor bring forth fruit unto God.

VIII. HUMILITY. This virtue goes hand in hand with *Meekness*,* and, like that, flows essentially from *Wisdom*. Humility

* The essential difference between meekness and humility, seems to be just this: Humility brings down the haughtiness of man; meekness binds this haughtiness and prevents it from rising.

is that principle of virtue, exercised in modesty, which produces a wise, sober, cautious, discreet and amiable deportment, in conduct and conversation, through all the members of the body of Christ, and in each one and all, according to their respective lots and callings, and according to the measure of their acquirements, gifts and graces in the house of God. This virtue is indispensably necessary to promote and maintain the union and harmony of the church of God, which is the body of Christ, and greatly promotes the union of the spirit in all the members. It is one of the brightest ornaments of the inner man, and the church cannot be supported without it.

The virtue of humility leads to a modest conversation and deportment towards God and man. It teaches us to speak with reverence and godly fear concerning God and all his works; it leads us to a humble and willing submission to the will of God, in all things, and under all circumstances. Humility is regardless of worldly honor, it seeks no preferment, and looks with indifference on all those allurements which feed the pride and vanity, and captivate the feelings of a vain world. This is that lowly virtue to which Jesus Christ had a particular reference when he said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."* Therefore, "Be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."† From this virtue proceeds repentance and godly sorrow for sin: to this Jesus Christ alluded in saying, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."

How great is the contrast between the exalted feelings of pride, and the modest sensations of humility! How excessively foolish and vain it is for fallen man to pursue schemes of self-exaltation, and vain glory, which must and will finally end in debasement and degradation of soul! Let all who profess the christian name, remember the testimony of Jesus Christ; "Whosoever exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted."‡

IX. Prudence. The virtue of prudence is of inestimable value. True christian prudence is that virtue which leads to a discreet, judicious and wise improvement of every natural and moral faculty, and of all the powers, gifts and graces given of God to man. Temperance is one of the distinguishing graces of prudence: for all gifts and graces are bestowed in vain, unless a discreet and temperate improvement be made of them. "The wisdom of the prudent is to understand his way;" and "the prudent man looketh well to his going."|| Prudence proceeds from Wisdom, and the house of prudence is the habitation of wisdom. "I *Wisdom* dwell with *Prudence*."¶

* Matt. v. 3. † 1 Peter v. 5. ‡ Luke xiv. 11. || Prov. xiv. 8 & 15. ¶ Prov. viii. 12.

He who is blessed with the virtue of prudence, is not hasty in his words, nor rash in any of his conduct; but is watchful over all his words and actions; he is careful and discreet in all things. He is industrious and faithful in his duty, both in things spiritual and temporal; but does not go beyond his strength, in soul nor body. He does not carelessly scatter and lose the gifts and graces of God; he does not waste nor misimprove any blessing, spiritual nor temporal; but makes a wise and temperate use and improvement of all things committed to his charge, according to the best of his understanding and abilities. He who transgresses against the virtue of prudence, is deficient of the spirit of Wisdom from whence it proceeds. This virtue can be maintained by watchfulness only. "What I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch."*

X. PATIENCE. This is a very powerful virtue, and flows essentially from Power and Love. It is of essential importance to every christian, especially when under trials and afflictions. Forbearance and long suffering are its distinguishing graces. It fills the soul with constancy, and enables it to bear up under the severest trials, and to persevere through the greatest difficulties. It is always subject to the will of God, and always ready and willing to wait God's appointed time. It never faints under any trials; and therefore reaps the reward of its constancy and perseverance in due season. Without patience, there is no perseverance; therefore, "let patience have her perfect work."

He who fully possesses the virtue of patience, is never unreconciled to any duty, however severe and trying. He never murmurs nor repines at his lot; nor does he complain that his way is hard, and that of others easy. He is never fretful and peevish; but always exercises such a degree of love to the work of God, that he can constantly persevere in the performance of every known duty, whatever difficulties may attend it. He is willing to endure all things *for Christ's sake and the gospel's*, and to bear any cross rather than lose his justification before God.

But he who indulges feelings of discouragement, suffers loss, and is always in danger of falling away, because he is lacking in patience. He who faints under trials, is destitute of patience, and must fall, unless supported by others. He who gives way to feelings of impatience, dishonors himself and his holy calling. "Ye have need of patience," saith the apostle, "that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."†

XI. THANKFULNESS. This virtue proceeds from the free operation of the love and goodness of God in the soul. A soul in the possession of the genuine love of God, feels a sense of his unbounded goodness; and is thereby feelingly excited to a holy fervor of heavenly joy and gratitude. He is thus enabled to bless God for

* Mark xiii. 37. † Heb. x. 36.

his goodness, to praise him for his love, and cheerfully serve him with all the faculties of soul and body. This is the virtue of thankfulness, and it is the most acceptable worship of God. Cheerfulness and good-will are the attendant graces of this heavenly virtue.

True gospel thankfulness is not the transient excitement of a moment, produced by an occasional manifestation of love and goodness, and which has no abiding residence in the soul. Such temporary excitements are often experienced by many warm and zealous professors of religion; and tho they may proceed from the occasional effusions of the Divine Spirit; yet they are soon scattered and destroyed by the inveterate corruptions of the human heart, which, like a cage of unclean birds, will soon waste and consume all the good seed that comes within their reach, and leave the poor soul as destitute as ever.

But when the seed of Divine love and goodness is sown in a good and honest heart, which has been cleansed from all unrighteousness, and made a fit temple for the Holy Ghost to dwell in, then it becomes an abiding treasure; and this produces true thankfulness. By the operation of this virtue, the soul is constantly prevented from the indulgence of any ungrateful and unthankful feelings; and is at all times ready to render thanks to God, for every appearance of his love and goodness, and for all the kind favors of his Providence, both spiritual and temporal.

He who is unthankful, is unholy; and "without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." He who indulges any feelings that the way of God is hard, or that the cross of Christ is unreasonable, or that any duty which the gospel requires is unnecessary, is devoid of thankfulness. He who, after having been called by the gospel hankers after the carnal gratifications of nature, and regrets that he cannot longer enjoy the alluring pleasures of this world, is insensible of the mercy and goodness of God, in calling him from the vain and transitory enjoyments, to the way of life and salvation from all sin: he is unthankful and ungrateful, and is in danger of falling away and losing the way of God.

XII. Charity. This is the last and the greatest of all the christian virtues. It is the genuine operation of *goodness* and *love* in the soul, and is exercised in righteousness. It is "full of mercy and good fruits." It is that benevolent principle which kindly administers whatever is truly needful for the benefit, support and happiness of soul and body, each in its proper order. It administers, indeed the treasures brought forth by all the other virtues, and thus is produced the perfection of happiness in the holy City. The apostle Paul considered charity as the greatest of all the virtues: and why? Because, without charity, there can be no abiding administration of the gifts of God; and therefore all others must fail, unless they are supported by it.

Let a man possess never so much of that religious fervor which he calls the love of God, it will avail him nothing without charity. True charity will influence him to love the children of God, and to administer freely to their necessities; to love all the creatures of God, and be ready to promote the comfort and happiness of all, both of soul and body, according to his capacity and their necessities. He who is destitute of this kind of charity, is equally destitute of the love of God. He who bears any grudge or hardness against any person, or is unjust or cruel in any case, even towards his domestic animals, acts in direct opposition to the divine principle of charity; and whatever his profession may be, he can have no just claim to the love of God; *he does not possess it.*

Finally: All false judging, jealousies, evil surmisings, evil speaking, railing, backbiting, slander, and the like, are violations of the virtue of charity; and so far as the christian professor is faulty in any of these respects, he is deficient in christian charity, however exalted his profession; and hence, in proportion as he is deficient in this virtue, all other gifts and graces will profit him nothing.

Thus far have we attempted to show the nature of the twelve virtues, which constitute the eternal law of Christ, in the new creation of God. The substance of these virtues is everlasting, and can never be changed. They are the operating springs of all the works of God, in the true order of Heaven and earth. They are the foundation of the number *twelve*, so often used by the inspired writers, in describing the order of the work of God, both typical and spiritual. The twelve tribes of Israel, according to the order of the flesh, were but shadows of this spiritual order of the work of God. The twelve apostles of Jesus Christ also represented these twelve virtues, which constitute the substance of that gospel which they were commissioned to preach.

But the most striking representation of these virtues may be seen in John's vision of the Holy City.* "And he carried me "away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me "that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of Heaven "from God." The following remarks will illustrate this subject.

1. This Holy City had *twelve gates;* and tho, according to the testimony of Jesus Christ, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it;" and again; "I am the way, and the truth, and the life;" and also "I am the door;" yet the holy city had twelve gates; and these gates were the entrances into the city. The true meaning is, the twelve gates which John saw in his vision, were the figurative representations of the twelve heavenly virtues, manifested in Christ, who is the only way; and it is through the power and influence of all

* See Rev. chap. xxi.

these virtues, that the soul must find an entrance into the Holy City. That is; he must come into the possession of all these virtues, in a greater or less degree, according to the measure of his capacity, before he can become a fit inhabitant of the Holy City, and actually possess it. For it is declared by the testimony of eternal truth, that, "There shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, or worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." The operation of these virtues will effectually exclude every evil from all souls that possess them, and walk in them.

2. "And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several "gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, "as it were transparent glass." Thus these gates were of the one gospel pearl; which is the "pearl of great price." For they are the one only way of entrance into the Holy City, or Kingdom of Heaven. The pure gold, like transparent glass, which formed the street of the city, shows not only the perfect purity of the way, but also its perfect clearness. No impurity nor imperfection, no shade of darkness, doubt or uncertainty, can possibly exist in this pure way; but all is clear and perfect, and will truly be found so, by every faithful soul who shall continue to walk therein. This pure and clear street, therefore, is the one only way of God, in which all souls must walk, in order to possess the Holy City, and dwell in it; for it is situated in the midst of those twelve virtues, surrounded and measured on all sides by them.

3. "And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there "shall be no night there: for the glory of God did lighten it, and "the Lamb is the light thereof." All darkness and doubts are done away by the light and glory of God, revealed in and through the Lamb, and made manifest in these christian virtues; and the way of entrance is free for all souls. And these same virtues, through which is found the only entrance into the holy city, are also its defence and protection: for while souls walk in these virtues, they are safe from all evil; no evil can possibly enter through them. Hence it is said, "There shall in no wise enter into it any "thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or "maketh a lie."

4. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may "have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates "into the city."* Some suppose this to imply that there are many ways of entrance into the Holy City, or Kingdom of Heaven. But let no one deceive himself with this supposition. Christ is the only way, and this one way contains all these gates: for whosoever is obedient to the operation of all the preceding virtues, will keep all the commands of God; and thus he finds an entrance

* Rev. xxii. 14.

through all these gates. Such therefore, and such only, have a right to the tree of life, and to an inheritance in the Holy City.

5. "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in "them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.—And the "foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all man-"ner of precious stones." The twelve apostles were the first whom Christ sent to preach the gospel of the Kingdom, which is founded on these twelve virtues. And the precious stones with which they were garnished, are all the gifts and graces of the Spirit, given through Christ, which proceed from these twelve virtues, which are the foundations on which the wall of the city is built.

6. It is worthy of remark that, tho the wall had twelve foundations, which were each of different kinds of precious stones; yet the building of the wall was *Jasper;* and also that "her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as chrystal." Jasper is here represented as the most precious of all stones; and therefore the most proper representation of HIM who is the Eternal Foundation of all goodness and virtue; and it also clearly shows the work to be all of God. "He that sat upon the throne was to look upon like Jasper." Again; the first foundation of the wall was jasper. This evidently represents *faith*, which is the seed of God, the first virtue, and the medium through which all the others proceed from God to man.

7. And the wall was "great and high." This was measured by the same number, twelve times twelve, equal to one hundred and forty-four. "And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred "and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, "that is, of the angel." Thus the foundations, height and measurements of the wall, were according to the same number with the gates. This shows that the Holy City, as respects both its defence and entrances, is protected by the same twelve virtues. But why is it called the measure of a *man* and of the *angel?* This shows that, tho it is all of the angelic or heavenly order; yet it must be manifested in man; that is, man must be measured by the same rule, and be found in the same heavenly and angelic virtues, in order to become a fit inhabitant of this Holy City, and be protected in it.

8. As the natural man cannot conceive of a building, without associating with it the idea of materiate substances, as the constituent parts thereof, he will perhaps infer from thence, that the Holy City cannot be composed of these virtues; because they are not materiate substances. But we would ask, Of what can the spiritual building of God be formed, if not of spiritual virtues? As the material world is composed of materiate substances; so the spiritual world must necessarily be composed of spiritual substances: for there is a real substance in spiritual things, as well as in natu-

ral; yea, and a substance too, which is infinitely more substantial and durable. Thus saith the apostle; "Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing that ye have in Heaven *a better and more enduring substance.*" And again; "*Faith is the substance of things hoped for.*" It must therefore be admitted, that the spiritual creation is substantial and eternally durable, in its order of existence. And certainly these virtues are spiritual and eternal, and therefore more substantial and durable in their spiritual and eternal order, than any materiate substance whatever. And tho the natural man is unable to discern spiritual substances; yet when the Holy City is represented and revealed to him, by these twelve virtues, he may, as by a figure, form some idea of what the substance consists.

9. All things in the natural world, and all the works and dealings of God with man, on earth, are but shadows and figurative representations of spiritual things, and of the works and dealings of God with his people, in the new creation. As the sons of Jacob, who composed the house of their father, and were the primary foundations of the chosen tribes of Israel, were twelve in number; and as the apostles who were the pillars, or primary foundations of the church of Christ on earth, in the days of his first appearing, were also twelve in number; so these numbers represent the primary foundations of the spiritual work of God in man, as manifested in this day of Christ's second appearing. The measure of the Holy City is according to the same number, being twelve thousand furlongs every way.

10. Thus we see that the Holy City, *New-Jerusalem*, in its foundations, entrances, adornings, productions and measurements is established, furnished and regulated by the same number. The servants of God were also sealed according to the same number, twelve thousand of each tribe of Israel, being the Israel of God. Those also, who were seen standing with the Lamb on Mount Zion, were of the same number, twelve times twelve thousand, or one hundred and forty-four thousand. Mount Zion is the same holy city herein described. This clearly shows that the servants of God, in the work of the new creation, that is, those "who follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth," are all prepared and brought forth, numbered and sealed by these twelve virtues; and hence it is, that "they are without fault before the throne of God." And none but such can enter and dwell in "Mount Zion, the City of the living God."

11. "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as chrystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." This is the source of eternal life, and is brought to light by the *seven Spirits* of God. "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was the *tree of life*, which bare twelve

manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month." These are the fruits of the twelve virtues, which are produced in twelve regular orders, one after another."* "And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." These leaves are the gifts and graces of the twelve virtues; and are to be administered by those who possess them, and which must heal the lost children of men, and give them eternal life, if they ever obtain it. The *tree of life*, which stands in the midst of the street, is Christ, who stands in the midst of the way of life, yielding the fruits of these twelve virtues for all who walk therein. The tree is represented in the vision, as standing on *either side*, that is, on each side of the river. This was designed to represent the manifestation of Christ, both in the male and the female, between whom the waters of life flow in the church, producing the fruits of Christ in the members.

12. John's vision of the "Woman clothed with the Sun, and having upon her head a crown of twelve stars," represents, in a striking manner, the same twelve virtues. These are placed as a crown of glory upon the head of the divine *Spirit of Wisdom*, who is the Mother or bearing Spirit of all the works of God to man; and from whom they flow, as heavenly lights to the righteous, in the new creation of God.

Many among the world of mankind have been engaged, for thousands of years, in searching after religion of some kind or other; but with all their searches and researches, aided by all the human wisdom they could obtain, they have never been able to find the real substance of true religion. The reason is, true religion cannot be known without the revelation of God, and instead of looking to God for direction, and seeking to do his will, with pure hearts and clean hands, they have pursued their own imaginations, and sought religion in their own devices, and blended it with the indulgence of their own corrupt propensities. Hence they have generally placed religion in speculative tenets, and ceremonial forms: so that among the great bulk of mankind, in every age, human creeds and human ceremonies have ever constituted the *summum bonum*, or essential virtues of their religion.

But it is through the revelation of God only, that true religion is made known to man. And it is through this revelation alone, that the twelve christian virtues, and their attendant graces, have

* The number *twelve* represents the different orders and states of souls in the spiritual work of God; and these different orders and states have their foundation in the twelve primary virtues which constitute the foundations of the holy city. The order, state and class of all souls are determined and fixed by their relative connection to these respective virtues; and tho true christians must possess a measure of all these virtues; yet their gifts, and the fruits which they bring forth, will partake mostly of the nature of that particular virtue with which they stand in the nearest relative connection, and for which they are the best qualified, according to the order of their creation. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit" This may be clearly seen among all the human race; all have their peculiar gifts and talents, "one after this manner, and another after that:" tho the gifts of many are often abused, misimproved or perverted to a wrong use. These are the talents they have received, and for the improvement of which they are accountable to God.

been brought to light, and made manifest in the true children of God. These virtues, proceeding from the seven Attributes, or Spirits of God, form the everlasting and unchangeable law of Christ; and this is the only true religion which ever will, or ever can save any soul, and fit it for the everlasting habitation and enjoyment of God. Wherever the true gospel is preached, it shows forth the very essence of these virtues; and they are all thereby opened to receive souls. Thus they represent the very gates of the New-Jerusalem, into all of which the soul must finally enter, and possess their substance, according to his measure, or he can never dwell in this holy habitation.

By walking in this law of eternal life, souls find a progressive increase in the very nature and substance of these virtues; and become as lively stones, fitted and built up into a spiritual house, a holy temple and habitation of God. And none can enter this holy temple, but by and through this eternal and unchangeable law, the law of the Holy City, New-Jerusalem, which is revealed in and through Christ. The operation of these virtues effectually shuts out every unholy thing, and forms the law of Christ, for the government of his church, which is the house of God, and "the habitation of his throne;" as it is written: "This is the law of the "house; Upon the top of the mountain, the whole limit thereof "round about shall be most holy. Behold this is the law of the "house."*

This is the pattern of the eternal law, the only rule for christians to walk by. Therefore, let all judge by this, who among professors, really possess the character of true christians. Let all professors of religion examine themselves, and seriously consider how near they come to this pattern, shown by the Lamb, in the holy mount of God: for none can enter and dwell in the Holy City, the spiritual house of the new creation, unless they walk by this rule, and keep this law.

CHAPTER II.

The seven moral Principles of the Church of Christ, as reduced to practice in the United Society.

THE illustration of the twelve christian virtues, contained in the preceding chapter, brings to view *seven moral principles*, which form the practical and external law of life for the direction and government of Christ's followers in his everlasting Kingdom, which is now begun on earth. These seven principles were established by the precepts and confirmed by the example of Jesus Christ while on earth, and may be stated in the following order:

* Ezek. xliii. 12.

1. *Duty to God;* 2. *Duty to man;* 3. *Separation from the world;* 4. *Practical peace;* 5. *Simplicity of language;* 6. *Right use of property;* and 7. *A virgin life.*

I. DUTY TO GOD.

This principle flows from the attributes of *love* and *righteousness* in God, and is inspired by faith and hope. It is displayed in our thankfulness to God for all his goodness, and in our perfect obedience to his Divine will. It directs all those feelings of prayer, praise and adoration, which are due to God, as the Great Author of all good, and the only source of all our happiness here and hereafter. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, 'and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy 'strength: This is the first and great commandment."* This duty is paramount to all others, and is the foundation of every moral principle. All our moral and religious duties; all our devotions of heart and soul; all our exercises of mind and body, in the service of God, comprehending *all our strength*, must be founded on our love to God; otherwise we fail in our duty to him. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.—"If a man love me," said Jesus, "he will keep my words."†

Genuine love to God, naturally produces obedience to his commands; and whoever, in honesty and meekness, performs any of those duties which are comprehended in our *duty to God*, proves thereby his love to God. But a thousand professions of love to God, will avail nothing, without obedience to his commands. That servant who makes great professions of love to his master; yet instead of obeying his commands, or doing his service, spends his time in pursuing his own gain, and seeking his own pleasure, can neither be considered as a faithful servant, nor an honest man. What then shall we think of that professed servant of God, who talks largely of his love to God, and yet, instead of obeying his commands, or doing his duty to God, is continually pursuing his own schemes, seeking his own pleasures, and indulging his own carnal propensities? Surely he can neither be considered as a faithful servant of God, nor a good christian.

It ought also to be remarked and seriously considered, by every professor of religion, that whoever is influenced to attempt the performance of his duty to God, from any cause which is contrary to the love of God; or is influenced by any motives which do not proceed from honesty and meekness, will find his attempts to prove barren and unfruitful; and let all such beware that they are not guilty of sacrilegious mockery, instead of performing their duty to God.

* Matt. xxii. 37, 38. & Mark xii 30. † John xiv. 23. & 1 John v. 3.

II. DUTY TO MAN.

"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."* This duty is second only to the preceding one, and, like that, flows from the attributes of *love* and *righteousness*. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."† This rule, laid down by Jesus Christ, is so plain and comprehensive that it not only shows our duty to man, in the clearest light, but it includes every obligation of man to his fellow creatures, under every circumstance. Let every person endowed with rational understanding, conform strictly to this rule, and exercise it in wisdom and prudence, and with respect to his duty to man, his justification is sure, and his reward certain.

Every violation of this rule shows a deficiency of the virtues of honesty, humility and charity, and is a transgression of the law of Christ. As mankind are rational and social beings, the field for the exercise of this duty, is very extensive, as well as very important. There are but few situations in life, in which a man cannot be more or less useful to his fellow creatures, in some way or other which comes within this *golden rule*, as it is called; yet how few there are, in the present day, who call themselves christians, that really live up to this rule!

III. SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD.

This principle flows from God's attributes of light and holiness. It is sown by faith, and nourished by hope and continence. It is an important principle in the new creation, without which the children of God would soon be blended with the children of this world, and lose their relation to the Kingdom of Christ. "My "Kingdom is not of this world," said Jesus.‡ And tho the Kingdom of Christ is now established on earth, in his chosen people; yet it is a spiritual Kingdom; and therefore cannot be blended with the kingdoms of this world. Nor can his real subjects take part in the affairs of these kingdoms, without blending themselves in some manner, with the world, and thereby hazarding their interest in the Kingdom of Christ. "Know ye not," saith the apostle, "that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Who "soever therefore, will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of "God."||

Hence every faithful member of Christ's Kingdom, feels the absolute necessity of abstaining from all those things which are connected with the honor and glory of this fallen world; from civil and political offices and emoluments; from party contentions and political strifes; from the vain pursuits of ambition and popular applause; and from all those transitory enjoyments which feed

* Matt. xxii. 39. † Matt. vii. 12. ‡ John xviii. 36. || Jas. iv. 4.

the pride and vanity, and constitute the very life of the natural man.

These things belong not to the Kingdom of Christ; nor has Christ any part in them; nor can those who live in these things, with any propriety, be called the subjects of his Kingdom. The imperative testimony of eternal truth is, "Come out from among "them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the un-"clean thing, and I will receive you."* Neither Jesus Christ, nor any of his apostles, nor any members of the primitive church, had any thing to do with the government of this world. "When Jesus "perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make "him a king, he departed out of their way."† And when requested to judge between two brothers, concerning the division of an inheritance, he replied, "Man, who made me a judge, or a divider over you?"‡ By these things he evidently proved, agreeable to his own testimony, that his Kingdom was not of this world, and that it did not belong to him to meddle with any of its concerns.

It would appear very inconsistent for the subjects of any earthly government, or kingdom, to hold offices, and officiate in the concerns of a rival government, or enemies kingdom. None but those who are real citizens or subjects, either by birth or adoption and naturalization, can take an active part in the concerns of an earthly government. He therefore, who would share in the concerns of a foreign government, must first renounce the government of his native country, and become a subject of that foreign government. How then can the subjects of Christ's Kingdom, which is spiritual, and not of this world, have any share in the government of this world, without first renouncing their allegiance to the Kingdom of Christ, and becoming the willing subjects of this earthly government? For as it is an undeniable truth, that the order, powers, manners and customs of the governments of this world, are corrupted by the influences of the spirit of evil, they, of course, stand in direct opposition to the Spirit and government of Christ, and his Kingdom.

Christ's Kingdom and government can never be established on earth, among any people whatever, without a separation from the world; not indeed a separation from the natural creation, which is good in its order, nor from any thing in it which is virtuous, commendable, or useful to his true followers; but a separation from the follies, vanities, contaminating principles, and wicked practices of fallen man, under the reigning influence of a depraved human nature; and from all those things in which the great bulk of mankind seek their own honor and glory, instead of the honor and glory of God.

* 2 Cor. vi. 17. † John vi. 15. ‡ Luke xii. 14.

IV. PRACTICAL PEACE.

This principle flows from the attributes of love and goodnes in God, and is the fruit of meekness, patience and charity. I deed this heavenly principle so clearly characterizes the Spirit ar Kingdom of Christ, that the violation of it seems evidently a viol tion of every Divine attribute, and of every christian virtue.

Christ's Kingdom is a kingdom of peace; hence his subjec must be a peaceable and harmless people. "My Kingdom is n "of this world," said Jesus: "If my Kingdom were of this worl "then would my servants fight."* And because his Kingdom not of this world, those who are truly his servants will not figh When Peter in his zeal to defend his Master, drew a sword ar struck a servant of the high-priest, "Jesus said unto him, Put u "thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword, sha "perish with the sword."† Here is a plain and pointed testim ny of Christ against the use of the sword. Indeed it is impossibl from the very nature of Christ's Kingdom, that he should ev authorize warlike passions, jarring contentions and strife, upon ar occasion whatever.

All the predictions of the ancient prophets concerning the natu of Christ's Kingdom, have represented it to be a kingdom of peac and he himself was emphatically stiled, *The Prince of Peac* many hundred years before he made his appearance on eart His people are also represented as a peaceable people, dwelling peaceable habitations; and his government is described as a go ernment of peace. "For thus saith the Lord, Behold I will e "tend peace like a river;—I will make thy officers peace and th "exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in th "land.—All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and gre "shall be the peace of thy children.—The work of righteousne "shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and a "surance forever."‡

Thus it appears that his coming, his Kingdom and his peop were described, in early ages, by the tongue of inspiration, in pr phetic strains of peace. And when the time came, his birth w announced by the angels of Heaven, in glorious songs of peac "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good-w "towards men."‖ And all these predictions, as far as they relat to his personal ministration, in that day, were fully confirmed: he was evidently *The Prince of Peace;* and his ministration w a ministration of peace and good-will towards men; and all w were willing to receive him, were made partakers of his peac "Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the ch "dren of God;" said he. He taught them the way of peace a

* John xviii. 36. † Matt. xxvi. 52.
‡ Isa ix. 6.—xxxii. 17.—liv. 13.—lx. 17, 18. & lxvi. 12. ‖ Luke ii. 14.

ghteousness, bore their infirmities, healed their maladies, com-
orted them in their afflctions, encouraged and strengthened them
their faith, and at last, when about to leave them, he commend-
d them to his Father, prayed for them, blessed them, and said,
Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the
world giveth, give I unto you.—Hereafter I will not talk much
with you; for the prince of this world cometh, and hath noth-
ing in me."*

Before the preceding predictions could be fully realized, in the
nal establishment of Christ's peaceable Kingdom on earth, there
as a time in which the spirit of Antichrist prevailed to root out
nd destroy that good seed of peace which Christ had sown. Then
ıcceeded "the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel
ıe prophet, standing where it ought not,"† of which Jesus had
orewarned his disciples. Then every species of abomination was
ommitted, under the sacred name of christianity, and blood and
arnage deluged the earth, under the professed banners of *The
rince of Peace.* Abomination of desolation, sure enough! This
as the work of that spirit to which Jesus alluded in saying, "The
rince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." The prince
this world, is a prince of war, and not of peace.

Ever since that celebrated heathen warrior, called *Constantine
e Great*, assumed the christian name, to sanctify his bloody
eeds, and obtained the title of *the first christian emperor*, the
rince of this world has reigned among a people who have called
emselves christians. Hence the origin of that incongruous title,
ristian warriors, which has been so often applied to those mur-
ring Cains, who have imbrued their hands in the blood of their
ethren, under a profession of christianity. But it is in vain for
e advocates of war to call themselves christians, or to claim any
lation to Christ: for they have no part in him. They are the
bjects of the prince of war, and not of the Prince of peace.
ings, princes, nations and people, who make war upon each other,
d shed the blood of their fellow men, and still claim the name of
ristians, are the deluded subjects of Antichrist's kingdom—the
ildren of the prince of this world, who, under the assumed name
Christ, are violating the best principles of christianity, the prin-
ples of peace and good-will to men.

All the precepts delivered by our Savior, breathed "peace and
od will to man:" and they were all confirmed by his works. And
was doubtless the peaceable tendency of his ministration and
ctrines, which so alarmed the jealous and envious Jews; else
by this argument? "If we let him thus alone," said they, "all
men will believe on him, and the Romans will come and take
away both our place and nation."‡ But notwithstanding all

* John xiv. 27 & 30. † Mark xiii 14. ‡ John xi. 48.

their warlike principles, aided by their cruel policy in putting hi to death, in order to stop the prevalence of his doctrines, an secure the safety of the nation, they were at length overtaken b the very calamities which their barbarous policy was intended t avert. And it ought to be remembered, as a warning to persecu tors, that the persecuting cruelty of the Jews, towards Jesus Chris and his followers, was evidently the very cause of the calamitie which befel their "place and nation."

It is evident that Jesus Christ, and his apostles after him, inva riably maintained the principles of peace, both by precept an example; and these principles were continued in the primitiv church, so long as that church stood in its purity. This fact i confirmed by the most authentic accounts of those times. Celsus a heathen philosopher, who wrote against the christians in th latter part of the second century, brings this charge against them "That they refused to bear arms, even in case of necessity;" an complains, "that if the rest of the empire were of their opinion it would soon be overrun by the barbarians."* But notwithstand ing this objection of Celsus, the Romans, with all their warrin powers and principles, even after *professed christians* began t bear arms, were unable to save the empire from being "overru by the barbarians."†

It is not a little surprising that there should be so many, at th present day, who openly profess the peaceable religion of Jesu Christ, and yet are, in principle, the advocates of war, and wi make the same objections against the principles of peace whic this heathen made. What then is the difference between a warrin christian and a warring heathen? The objection of both again the principles of peace is, in substance, that if the whole natio were of this opinion, we should soon be conquered by other na tions, who maintain the principles of war. But the objections the warring christian evidently appear much more glaringly incon sistent: for the heathen warrior talks of no enemy but the barba rians, while the christian warrior wishes to be armed against thos who by profession are his brethren and fellow christians!

But we believe, without the least shadow of doubt, that th principles of peace are the best means of preserving peace that nation can possess. As like causes produce like effects; so th principles of peace have a natural tendency to produce peace while the principles of war will invariably produce war. And w feel full confidence in the opinion, that if the principles of peac were faithfully cultivated at home, and carefully maintained in a our intercourse abroad, they would prove a more sure protectio

* Lardner, vol. viii.

† But it appears very evident, that one principal cause of this calamity was, their cru persecutions against the *true christians*; for the records of history attest, that almost eve persecution was followed by an irruption of the barbarians.

o any nation, than the principles of war, with all its expensive preparations; and that they would also have a much greater tendency to preserve the honor and increase the glory of a nation, all the fears and apprehensions of warriors to the contrary notwithstanding. An impartial examination of the history of all ages would doubtless confirm the truth of this remark.

As before observed, the principles of peace flow from the attributes of goodness and love, in God; consequently the spirit of war is opposed to these attributes. Goodness to a nation is the result of peace; but great evils result from war. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor;" but hatred, which is the source of all wars, leads mankind to "bite and devour one another." The spirit of war leads its advocates to revenge real or supposed injuries, and always involves the innocent with the guilty. It produces no goodwill to man; but is the ruin of many for the aggrandizement of a few. Where is the nation among all the warring powers of Europe, that has not received more injury than benefit from the wars in which it has been engaged?

War is opposed to God's attributes of righteousness and justice: for altho it is often waged under pretence of obtaining or defending certain real or supposed rights, or of avenging real or supposed wrongs; yet, in reality, it pays no regard to right; its great object is wrong; it seeks revenge; it produces injury; and its greatest injury often, if not most generally, falls upon those for whose rights the war was professedly undertaken—the rights of the nation—the rights of the people. And in the end, it generally injures their rights and increases their wrongs; and is therefore, throughout, productive of great injustice.

The spirit of war is opposed to God's attribute of holiness. It engenders and promotes in man, the most unholy passions. Ambition, pride and lust, wrath, envy and strife, revenge and cruelty, and the most heaven-daring impiety, are the notorious concomitants of war. In short, an army in a state of warfare, is the greatest school of vice and iniquity of any on earth. And if any are so fortunate as to pass through it without the ruin of their moral characters; yet it must be acknowledged, that very few escape the general contamination of morals which it is calculated to produce.

The spirit of war is contrary to the attributes of *light* and *truth*. It darkens the light of truth in the soul, and makes men blind to their own best interests—to their best good, both in this world and that which is to come. It seeks, through false pretexts, to injure the innocent, as well as the guilty. It obscures every virtuous sentiment of the heart, and falsely exalts heroic pride and daring ambition as the highest standard of merit, and the most honorable principles of man.

Finally: The spirit of war is contrary to the attributes of *power*

and *wisdom*. Certainly no human power can be so foolishly ex
erted, nor any human policy so unwisely employed. The powe
and wisdom of God can never be exercised to favor the spirit o
war, in fallen man, without operating directly against his othe
revealed attributes, which cannot be done: for the attributes of Go
can never clash with each other. Tho God may suffer one natio
to contend with another, and leave both to bear the judgment o
their own folly; yet he never can confer his power for the purpos
of exalting the pride of fallen man, nor bestow his wisdom on suc
demonian policy. "This wisdom descendeth not from above, bu
"is earthly, sensual and devilish. But the wisdom that is fron
"above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be en
"treated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, an
"without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown i
"peace of them that make peace."*

V. SIMPLICITY OF LANGUAGE.

This principle flows from God's attribute of holiness, and is en
joined by the declarative voice of *truth*. "Speak ye every ma
the truth to his neighbor."† It is the practical operation of th
virtues of honesty and simplicity, in all our communications.

As language is the medium through which we convey our ideas
it is a matter of the first importance that our language should pro
ceed from an honest heart. Honesty of heart and simplicity o
language, will always insure us a good conscience towards Goo
and proper respect towards our fellow men; and safely conduct u
through all the scenes of this mortal life. "Swear not at all," sai
Jesus, "but let your communication be, yea, yea, and nay, nay
"for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."‡ It has bee
objected that this alludes to profane oaths; but these were cor
demned by the law of Moses; and it is evident from the expres
testimony of Jesus Christ, that he had reference to the oaths allow
ed by the law, as well as all others. "Ye have heard that it hat
"been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thysel
"but shall perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you
"*Swear not at all.*" What can be more plain and pointed.‖

* Jas iii. 15, 17, 18. † Zech. viii. 16 ‡ Matt v. 34 & 37.

‖ The form of what is considered a lawful christian oath, is such a solemn profanation
words that we could hardly believe that a man who could deliberately make use of i
would be honest enough to speak the truth, even under its pretended sanctity, were it n
that the force of education and the sanction of human laws have so far blinded the minds
mankind that they do not discover its profanity: hence they use it inconsiderately, witho
being conscious of its real import. But let us examine its glaring profanity The *swearin
christian* witness, laying his hand upon the Bible or New Testament, must repeat or ...e h
assent to the following form of words: "*I solemnly swear upon the holy evangelists of A
mighty God. that what I am about to say in this cause, shall be the truth, the whole trut
and nothing but the truth. so help me God.*" What is this but calling upon the holy evan
gelists to witness the solemn breach of a Divine command which they have recorded, ex
pressly forbidding to swear; and at the same time profanely calling upon the Almighty
help them in the sacrilegious violation of a solemn precept of Jesus Christ, given for th
express purpose of teaching christians to *swear not at all!*

Jesus Christ having thus pointedly excluded all swearing, it is therefore evident that oaths do not belong to his Kingdom; consequently true christians can have nothing to do with them. Hence the practice of swearing must belong exclusively to those kingdoms, nations and people, who are under the government of the prince of this world. Its professed object is to prevent false testimony in judicial causes, and maintain confidence in civil society, and in the reciprocal transactions between man and man. But the numerous frauds continually practiced, under the sanction of oaths, to the great perversion of truth and righteousness, are so many proofs of their insufficiency to maintain justice and equity in civil governments. We believe that a man who has not a principle of honesty in himself, will never be made honest by the formality of an oath. And there is doubtless much propriety in the vulgar maxim, "*He that will swear, will lie.*"

All swearing and taking the name of God in vain; all profane language, foolish talking, vain jesting, and using sacred words and sacred names, in foolish exclamations; all low and profane vulgarisms; all filthy and obscene language, calculated to defile the sense and exclude the fear and love of God from the soul, and whatever else is contrary to the spirit of honesty, simplicity and truth, are violations of this principle, they manifest a vain, empty, wicked mind, and mark a soul destitute of the fear of God. "Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile."* All lying and deceit, all quibbling, cavilling and double-dealing, and in short, every kind of communication, and every manner of expression, and all use of language which does not proceed from an honest heart, and is not consistent with plain and simple truth, are violations of this principle. "Be what you seem to be, and seem to be what you really are," is a maxim enjoined by our first elders, and is held as a sacred principle by every faithful believer.

We are not required to communicate all we know, or all that we have heard and seen, whenever it is demanded of us, without any respect to persons, place or circumstances; this would be the height of folly and weakness, and would do more harm than good. "The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright."† We ought to guard carefully against all unnecessary and disorderly communications, and especially against communications to those who are liable to make a bad use of them, or to an enemy who is seeking to take undue advantage of us. Tale-bearing does not belong to the followers of Christ; it is of the wicked one; it is an enemy that "soweth discord."

But in all our intercourse, with all people, where a reciprocal communication is required for mutual understanding; or where reasonable intelligence is required, from just and reasonable motives,

* Psa. xxxiv. 13. † Prov. xv. 2.

a fair, open and free communication will not, and cannot be justl withheld, by any truly honest and upright soul. And in all ou communications, nothing but the plain and simple truth can justif us: for altho we may be justified in withholding the truth, wher its communication is unnecessary, and can do no good; yet w cannot be justified in uttering a falsehood, on any occasion wha ever.

All flattering titles, and vain appellations of distinction, calcula ted to exalt the pride and feed the vanity of man, being in direc opposition to simplicity of language, are therefore excluded fro among the humble followers of Christ. Titles of honor and term of adulation, designed to flatter fallen man, and reverence hi above his Maker, find no place here. Hence the vain addresse of *Sir* and *Madam*, *Mister* and *Miss*, and the like, are excluded from the language of the United Society, as contrary to the law o Christ and the simplicity of his gospel. "Be ye not called *Rabbi* for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." Our Savior here alluded to the haughty, high-minded Scribes an Pharisees, who were fond of worldly honors and titles of distinc tion, and warned his disciples against following their example.

Thus he condemned the love of worldly honors, and flatterin titles of distinction, as unbecoming the children of God and ser vants of Christ. Yet how often do we see, at this day, those wh profess to be the servants of Christ, seeking and obtaining titles o honor and distinction which he never assumed, and never author ized his followers to assume; such as *Doctor of Divinity; Rev erend Sir; Right Reverend Father in God*, and the like. These high-sounding titles, so fascinating to antichristian vanity, are con ferred, like that of *Ambassadors of Christ*, by human authority and not by the authority of God. And thus these aspiring digni taries, while they profess to be the humble followers of the meek and lowly Savior, instead of following his self-denying and humili ating example, must be dignified, and almost deified, with ecclesi astical titles, far above any thing ever assumed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

How clearly do such professors show that they are under the influence of that spirit, "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God?"† But the day is fast approaching when, "God will lay judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet;" and all these profane and sacrilegious honors will be swept away with "the refuge of lies."‡

VI. RIGHT USE OF PROPERTY.

This principle flows from the attributes of *righteousness* and *love;* and in it is fully displayed the virtues of simplicity, humility

* Matt. xxiii. 8. †2 Thess. ii. 4. ‡ See Isa. xxv. ii. 17.

and charity. It is an important duty, and a distinguishing privilege of the gospel. The true followers of Christ are one with him, as he is one with the Father. This oneness includes all they possess: for he who has devoted himself to Christ, soul, body and spirit, can by no means withhold his property. As Christ, by his oneness with the Father, is made a partaker, in his lot and office, of all the attributes of God; so the true followers of Christ are, according to their measure, made partakers of all that he possesses; agreeable to his prayer to the Father: "The glory which "thou gavest me, I have given to them; that they may be one, "even as we are one."*

This oneness is the fruit of the gospel, and it can be obtained in no other way than by obedience to the gospel. The very nature and design of the gospel of Christ it to lead souls into this oneness; that they may possess one faith, enjoy one hope, and be able "to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."† This unity of the spirit leads to a oneness in all things, both spiritual and temporal; while the nature of selfishness tends only to scatter and divide. Hence mankind, under the influence of selfishness, are led to support and build up a separate interest, in all things. *Dear self* is the great object of all their concern and all their pursuits. The selfish man acts from selfish motives, in all his undertakings; even in his professed acts of charity, he bestows his alms with a view to trumpet forth his own praise, and obtain honor of men.

But it is impossible for souls who really enjoy the unity of the spirit, to feel satisfied with a separate enjoyment which their brethren and sisters might, with equal propriety, partake with them. Their comfort, their peace, their happiness, their enjoyments of every kind, are greatly augmented by sharing them in union with their brethren and sisters. Nor can they feel unwilling to suffer with them in their afflictions. Hence after having experienced the blessed enjoyments of this unity, their temporal property would feel like an intolerable burden to them, were they condemned to share it alone.

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." But selfish man has long claimed it as his, and long appropriated it to his own use. Forgetting that he owes all to God, he is continually grasping after more to gratify his own selfish propensities. But man was created to serve God; and he is required to serve him with all his faculties, which were given him for that very purpose. He is also required to serve God with his property, which was committed to his charge for the same purpose.

Our time in this world is but short: but a little while and we must appear before God, to give an account of the improvement we have made of our time and talents, and the temporal property

* John xvii, 22. † Eph. iv. 3.

intrusted to our care. If God has endowed us with talents to do good to our fellow mortals, we cannot be justified unless we improve those talents to that very purpose. And if he has also made us heirs of temporal property, or furnished us with the means and faculties to acquire it, as faithful stewards of God's heritage, we are so much the more accountable for the improvement we make of these privileges. Then let us improve them wisely.

There are many, very many of our fellow beings, as good by nature as ourselves, and doubtless as precious in the sight of God, who, through misfortune, are suffering for the want of the good things which we enjoy; and shall we be justified before God, if we do not extend the hand of charity according to our ability? By no means. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus is an instructive lesson to those who possess property. While many a poor, suffering, but honest Lazarus lies pining in misery and want, shall we withhold the crumbs of charity? Shall we suffer the dogs to outdo us in acts of kindness? If so, we must expect the scale shortly to be turned.

How many are the favorites of fortune, who share largely in the things of this world, and yet expend the property entrusted to their charge, in gratifying their own selfish propensities, in living in luxurious splendor, in *faring sumptuously every day;* while many of their poor neighbors are pining in poverty, and suffering under the hard hand of misfortune, and would gladly share in the fragments wasted by extravagance, or thrown to the dogs! Could these wealthy sons of pleasure draw aside the veil of futurity, and behold the day in which those who thus abuse their riches, will be constrained to cry to the suffering poor, from whom they now withhold the hand of charity, and beg for a drop of water to cool their tongues, they might then see the awful responsibility which lies upon the rich, and feel the vast importance of making a right use of their property.

The advice of Jesus Christ to the rich man, who desired to know what he should do to inherit eternal life, is an instructive lesson to the rich.* Origen, who lived in the latter part of the second century, has related this circumstance, as recorded in a book (now lost) entitled, *The gospel according to the Hebrews.* It is given by Origen in the Greek language, and quoted by Lardner, who gives the following translation:

"A certain rich man said to him, Master, what good thing shall "I do, that I may live? He said unto him, Man, keep the law and "the prophets. He answered him, That I have done. He said "unto him, Go sell all that thou hast, and distribute among the "poor, and come follow me. But the rich man began to scratch "his head, and it did not please him. And the Lord said unto

* See Matt. xix. 21. Mark x. 21. & Luke xviii. 22.

'him, How sayest thou, I have kept the law and the prophets? 'seeing it is written in the law, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as 'thyself; and behold, many of thy brethren, sons of Abraham, 'are clothed with rags, ready to perish for hunger, whilst thy 'house is filled with all sorts of good things, and nothing goes 'out of it to them. And turning about, he said to his disciple 'Simon, who was sitting by him, Simon, son of Joanna, it is easier 'for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich 'man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven."*

"The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof, the world and hey that dwell therein."† And as there are many in the world vho, by the favor of Divine Providence, enjoy much more than a ompetency, it is doubtless with a view to prove them, and see vhat use they will make of their property, that God has thus no- iced and distinguished them above the suffering poor whom he has laced in their neighborhood for the same wise purpose. How hen can so many of these probationary sons of wealth assume the hristian name, and professedly devote themselves to the service of od, while they withhold their property and essential services for heir own selfish purposes? And what is a professed devotion of he soul, while all that a man sets his heart and affections upon, in his world, is withheld? So he may profess love and charity for is poor neighbor, and yet give him nothing. Where then is the vidence of his love and charity? and how is his neighbor benefit- ed by either?

What reward has that servant to expect, who *professes* to de- ote himself to his master's service, to do his will, while at the ame time he *actually* devotes his time and talents, with all he ossesses, in serving himself, and doing his own will? Will his naster accept of empty professions and promises for real service? Vill he, or ought he to reward him as a faithful servant? In jus- ice he cannot: righteousness would forbid it.

Let every professor of christianity, and especially those who ossess property, apply the case to himself, and then ask his own oul, what reward he has a right to expect hereafter, for his pro- ession, without a real and actual devotion of substantial service, vith all he posseses to God. Can he expect a substantial reward or professed services, empty prayers and formal ceremonies, which ost him little or nothing, and which afford his poor neighbors, and ven his fellow christians, no real benefit, temporal nor spiritual, o soul nor body?

Tho many of the rich are able, in their individual capacities, to o much good with their interest, were they so disposed, without mpairing the principle; yet experience has proved, in the United ociety, that under the blessing of God, the right use of property,

* See Lardner's works, vol 2. p 505. † Psa. xxiv. 1. & 1 Cor. x 26 & 28.

in conformity to the law of Christ, is best promoted, among h followers, by uniting it in a common stock, where all belonging the Society, can unite to make it an increasing interest, for benev lent purposes, and at the same time, enjoy a competency out of upon terms of equality. Thus used, it affords a competent suppo to its former possessors, and is still increasing in usefulness, to a swer the demands of benevolence and charity. The same expe ence also proves, that a little, with union and harmony, and und judicious management, suffices to supply many wants.

It is doubtless generally understood, that Jesus Christ and h little family of disciples, all fared alike, being chiefly dependent the contents of the same scrip, for their temporal support. T primitive church at Jerusalem, was also founded on a united inte est. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one hea "and one soul: neither said any of them, that aught of the thin "which he possessed was his own; but they had all things co "mon."*

Thus they divested themselves of all selfishness, and like a ban of disinterested brethren and sisters, lived in love and harmon and all fared alike. These amiable examples were designed as pattern for christians; and had all who have since professed th name, been led by the true spirit of the gospel, and carefully co formed to this pattern, what an amiable and harmonious band christian nations might, long ere this day, have existed upon earth

VII. A VIRGIN LIFE.

The term *virgin* implies purity, and when used literally to e press the quality of any thing, it signifies pure, unmixed, undefile unadulterated. Hence the terms *virgin gold*, *virgin copper*, *vi gin snow*, and the like, are used to represent those substances in pure, unadulterated state. *A virgin life*, therefore, means a li of purity, a life undefiled with sinful indulgences, unmixed wi corrupt practices, unadulterated with carnal gratifications and in pure desires and pursuits. But the sense to which we more imm diately confine it, and which is indeed the most obvious, is to e press a life of continency, or a life of abstinence from the carn gratifications of the flesh, from sexual coition, and from all lasciv ous indulgences.

This pure principle flows from the attribute of *holiness*, and the genuine offspring of *continence* and *innocence*. "God ha "not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness, without whic "no man shall see the Lord. Blessed are the pure in heart: f "they shall see God."† Hence it is evident that, without puri and holiness, we cannot find acceptance in the sight of God. An it is an immutable truth, that the heavenly sensations of purit

*Acts iv. 32. † 1 Thess. iv. 7. Heb. xii. 14. & Matt. v. 8.

and holiness, and the unclean passion of lechery can never abide together in any soul: for where the former are in operation the latter is effectually excluded; and where the latter is in operation it equally excludes the former. Hence a virgin life is that which approaches the nearest to God, and partakes most of the Divine nature. This appears evident from the following well authenticated facts.

1. Among the ancient heathens, whatever was esteemed sacred and pure, was committed to the care of virgins. Their sacred fire was entrusted to virgins; their sacred oracles, prophetic warnings, and other divine manifestations were given to virgins. So that, notwithstanding their false religion, and the shameful and fraudulent superstitions of their priesthood, it is evident that on many important occasions, their virgins were honored with the prophetic gifts of the Spirit of God.

2. The devout Jews esteemed the virgin life the most pure; and virgins were often honored with prophetic oracles and gifts of the Spirit, when such manifestations of Divine favor were almost entirely withdrawn from all other classes of people among them. Josephus informs us that the Essenes, who maintained the virtue of continence, were many of them favored with Divine revelations.*

3. In the days of the apostles, virgins were particularly honored with the Spirit of God. The daughters of Philip the evangelist were virgins, and were blest with prophetic gifts.† It is stated by Dr. Horneck, that in the days of the primitive christians, "Thousands of their virgins freely dedicated themselves to God, and 'would be married to none but him; and tho many times they 'were tempted by rich fortunes, yet nothing could alter their resolutions."‡

4. From the most authentic accounts we have of the christian religion, in different ages, since the days of primitive christianity, it appears evident that those people, under whatever name or sect they have been classed, who, from a principle of devotion to God, have maintained a life of continency, notwithstanding they have been generally stigmatized as heretics, and have had their names cast out as evil, have been more highly favored, as a people, with the effusions of the Holy Spirit, and more particularly blessed, as individuals, with the heavenly gifts of God, than any other class of people whatever. These things prove the purity of the virgin character in the sight of God.

The term *virgin* is often used, in the language of the prophets, to represent the Church of Christ, and to signify purity of character; and to that character the promises of God were given. The prophet Jeremiah, in his predictions concerning the latter day of

* It is worthy of remark, that these Essenes were the only sect among the Jews whom Jesus did not reprove.

† See Acts xxi. 9.

‡ See Wesley's Christian Library, vol. 29. p. 136.

glory, three times in one chapter, applies the appellation of *virgin* to the millennial church, by which he evidently points out its purity. "Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, *O virgin* "of Israel! thou shalt again be adorned with thy tabrets, and shalt "go forth in the dances of them that make merry.—Then shall "the *virgin* rejoice in the dance, both young men and old together.—Turn again, *O virgin* of Israel! turn again to these thy "cities."*

It will probably be contended by some, that the prophet has here used the term *virgin* merely as a figure, to represent the church in its pure and happy state; not with any particular allusion to the character of continency, but in allusion to its general purity. This is, at least, admitting the purity of the virgin character. But it is necessary to observe in the first place, that a figure must bear a true analogy to the substance; otherwise it cannot be a proper figure. We would then ask, whether the selection of this term, as a figure of purity, does not clearly show that the character itself is more pure, in the sight of God, than any other? If so, then is not its opposite the most impure? Again: If God has chosen to represent his people by a figure which implies the most pure character does he not therefore require that they should support that character by the most pure life? And if the virgin life is the most pure did he not intend that they should live such a life? If not, then where is the consistency of representing them by a figure which implies a pure character?

When all this is duly considered, we must conclude that the term *virgin* was designed, not only as a standing memorial of that life which is the most pure in the sight of God; but also as a most powerful evidence that God did design that a people of that character should build and inherit the church of the latter day. This truth may be more fully confirmed and illustrated by the following remarks and observations.

1. Jesus Christ was born of a virgin. Thus a pure virgin character was chosen to receive the first seed of the *New Creation*, an incontestible evidence of the pure nature of that work which he was sent to introduce into the world, for the salvation and redemption of mankind from that impure nature in which they were begotten. And as his conception was without sexual impurity, it teaches us that, at the first entrance of souls into the life of Christ, they must reject that very impurity which was first rejected in his conception.

The miraculous birth of Jesus Christ by a virgin, also shows that, in him, the work of natural generation ceased, and a new and spiritual creation commenced. Hence in the regeneration, all who are begotten of Christ, must necessarily cease from that work, or

* Jer. xxxi. 4, 13, 21.

ose that spiritual life which they receive from him. Tho he was born into the world, yet he was not of the world. The same remark will apply to all his true followers, according to his own testimony: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."* It is readily admitted by all that it was not the work of Jesus Christ to propagate an earthly offspring; and the same is equally true of his followers also: for "if *they* are not of the world, even as *he* is not of the world," *they* can have no more to do with its works of generation than *he* had; because that work belongs solely to the children of the world, and not to the followers of Christ: *they* have a very different work to do.

2. The cross of Christ necessarily includes a virgin life, or a life of continency; because the carnal nature of man must die, before the soul can ever rise to God; and that nature, having its source and foundation in sexual coition, is fed and nourished by lascivious indulgences; therefore its death cannot be effected without this cross; and there is nothing in nature—nothing within the comprehension of the natural man, which can be more crossing to that carnal propensity than a life of continency. The follower of Christ is indeed required to deny himself, and take up his cross against every evil propensity that pertains to man's fallen nature; but he finds none so powerful, in nature, as that which is directly opposed to a life of virgin purity; because that is the source of all others; and therefore a cross against that propensity, is necessarily included in the general, self-denying cross which, according to the testimony of Christ, must be taken up in order to become his disciples; and indeed it is much the most weighty and important part of the cross of self-denial.

"If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."† Here we have the plain and positive declaration of Jesus Christ, that not only these natural relatives which stand in connexion with the man, according to the order of natural generation, but even his own life also must be hated, or he cannot be a disciple of Christ.‡

* John xvii. 16. † Luke xiv. 26

‡ It is not a little surprising to see how the sense of this and other similar passages is perverted by the blindness of expositors. The word *hate* in this text, they say, is used in a comparative sense; that is, they are not in reality to *hate* these relations, but only to *love them less*, when they stand in competition with their love to Christ. The *forsaking* spoken of in the 33d verse of the same chapter, they also qualify in such a manner, as entirely to remove a free and voluntary cross, by calling it *a comparative forsaking*, or *a willingness to forsake*, in case they should be called of God to do it; that is, when necessity requires it. This is like their *willingness to die*, when death is at the door, and they see there is no escape, but they *must* die. But Christ did not say,

But mankind are so prone to the indulgence of that fallen natur which binds them to the flesh, that they will exert every faculty t evade the force of truth and abolish the cross. They are willin to apply any other meaning to Christ's words, and to acknowledg faith in any other cross, except that which strikes at the ver source of their carnal enjoyments—the very choicest of all thei pleasures—the very life of the natural man. Such a cross is to painful for a fallen and corrupted nature to endure; it is killing— it is death to such a nature.

But the painful excitement, the distressing opposition whic man's carnal nature feels against such a cross, is a most powerfu evidence of its necessity. And were there no other argument i favor of it, this alone is sufficient to convince us that it is the ver cross to which Christ had a particular reference: for that natur must be destroyed out of the soul of man before he can find his re demption; and this cross of Christ is purposely designed to effec its destruction, without which it never will be destroyed.*

3. The nature of fallen man is selfish, being wholly bent o selfish gratifications. His desires are selfish; because they ar directed solely to objects which tend to gratify his selfishness His love is selfish; because it is confined to those who indulg and please his selfishness. In short, the gratification of *self* is th great object of all his pursuits. This selfish nature is doomed t destruction, and it is this which Christ requires his followers t hate. They are not required to hate the souls nor the bodies o their natural kindred, nor of any other creature: for this would b inconsistent with the whole tenor of Christ's precepts and examples But the real object of hatred is that fallen, selfish nature, which i the very life and support of this carnal relation, which binds th soul of man to the earth, and which produces and strengthens a his carnal and earthly connections.

Carnal affections must die, that spiritual affections may live for it is impossible for both to have an abiding residence in th soul. Carnal affections are selfish; they cleave to natural kin

love less, nor *forsake comparatively*; his expressions are used withou any qualification whatever; and they are positive and decisive, an plainly declare the only conditions on which they can be his disciples "If any man come to me, and *hate not his father* and *mother*, and *wif* "and *children*, and *brethren* and *sisters*, yea, and *his own life* also, *h* "*cannot be my disciple*—So likewise, whosoever he be of you, that for "saketh not *all that he hath*, he cannot be my disciple." What can b more plain and positive? and whence do such interpreters derive thei authority to reverse the express declaration of Jesus Christ? Surely i can be from no other source than from the corrupt nature of the flesh which always seeks to rival God's claim in man.

* Some talk much about sanctifying their carnal natures; but they might as well talk o sanctifying the devil: for that nature is the devil in man, and it never can be sanctified; must be crucified, or the soul never can be saved.

dred; they are chiefly confined to those narrow limits which circumscribe the connective ties of flesh and blood, and seldom, if ever, extend further than to those who are excited by interest, or some other selfish motive, to indulge, flatter and exalt their selfishness. And even here they are liable to be turned from one flattering object to another more flattering, and which can afford a higher gratification to *self*. So contracted, selfish and fleeting are carnal affections.

But spiritual affections are not circumscribed within so small a compass. They cannot be confined to such narrow limits; they embrace the whole creation of God; they shed abroad their benign love to all the human race; they extend the hand of kindness and charity according to the spirit of that Divine precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." The most powerful operations and the most extensive stretch of natural affections are very feeble and limited, when compared with the wide-spread effusions and divine operations of spiritual and heavenly affections. These heavenly affections are the rich and abiding treasure of every faithful believer; they are the treasures of a life of continence, the fruits of the cross of Christ, the genuine offspring of a virgin life. As carnal affections have a natural tendency to produce selfishness, with all its consequences; so spiritual affections will bring forth the genuine fruits of peace, love and disinterested benevolence.

4. Man is required to love God with all his heart, soul, mind and strength, and to place his highest affections there. He is at the same time, required to deny himself of all those carnal and earthly propensities, affections and lusts which bind him to the flesh, and which constitute the life of the natural man, in his fallen and depraved state; and in this sense, he is required to hate his own life. It is the same fallen and depraved nature which he is required to hate in all his earthly kindred. And when this nature is overcome and destroyed in himself, and in them, by the power of the gospel and a daily cross, then there is room for Christ to dwell in the soul, and the man can then love God in every such soul, whether they have been connected with him by the kindred ties of the flesh or not. God is no respecter of persons; and those who have the Spirit of God dwelling in them, will love those best who possess the most of that spirit.

When therefore, this important work is effected in the soul, by subjection and obedience to the cross of Christ; when the soul has gained a complete victory over that carnal, selfish nature, which first led to a wife, and, in its effects, produced all those carnal connexions which bound his affections to a carnal life; then he has obeyed the precept of Christ, and fully proved his hatred of that life, with all its connexions, by renouncing it and travelling out of it; and then also, is fulfilled to him, and in him, the promise of

Christ: "There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or
"sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for
"my sake and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred-fold
"now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers
"and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to
"come eternal life."*

Here then is the substance of the true *virgin life;* and this is
its promised reward. Here is the hatred which constitutes a true
christian disciple, and the blessing which follows it. A full and
final cross against the carnal nature of the flesh, and a hatred of
that life, with all those affections and lusts which have a natural
tendency to indulge and gratify it. In the reward, the *wife* is not
found; but persecutions supply her place. Nothing will sooner
kindle the fire of persecution than a cross against this carnal life;
especially where a wife is unreconciled to bear a part in the cross
which her husband has conscientiously taken up for Christ's sake
and the gospel's.

But, replies the objector, it cannot be that wives are to be hated
and forsaken; for the apostle Paul says, "Husbands, love your
wives." A very weak objection truly, after what has already been
said on the subject. But objectors generally omit the most impor-
tant part of this passage, which shows in what manner the apostle
taught the married christians, of that day, to love their wives; we
will therefore take the liberty to transcribe the passage in connection
and let modern christians see whether they live up to the apostle's
instructions. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved
"the church and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and
"cleanse it;—that he might present it to himself a glorious church
"not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should
"be holy, and without blemish: So ought men to love their wives
"as their own bodies."† Christ's love to the church, according
to this testimony, does not lead him to defile it, but to sanctify and
cleanse it, that it may be holy, and without blemish. "So ought
men to love their wives;" not with a carnal love, but with the same
pure virgin love; not defiling themselves and their wives with the
impure gratifications of lust; but in living lives of continency—in
maintaining *a virgin life.*

5. The same apostle also says, in another place, "I am jeal-
"ous over you with a godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to
"one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."‡
It was as a *chaste virgin* that they were to be presented to Christ;
and he would accept them in no other character. Knowing this,
the holy zeal of the apostle was stirred up to admonish these Co-
rinthian christians; lest their minds should be led away from the
purity and simplicty of the gospel, so that they would not preserve

* Mark x. 29, 30. † Eph. v. 25 to 28. ‡ 2 Cor. xi. 2.

their bodies "in sanctification and honor," by following the principles of purity and holiness, by living as Christ lived, and walking as he walked, which was evidently in a life of continence and chastity,—in a virgin life. If then, this principle of a virgin life were of the world, the world would undoubtedly love its own. But the very nature of man is wholly opposed to it, which is a sufficient evidence that it is not of the world, but of a superior origin.

6. But the most plain and pointed testimony of the apostle, in favor of a virgin life, is given in the seventh chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, by which he clearly shows the wide difference between virgin purity, and sexual indulgence; and in which he prophetically points to a day of more perfect purity, when all such indulgences must come to an end. And all the attempts of modern christians to draw from the apostle's doctrine any licence to indulge their lascivious propensities, are but so many evidences of the depraved state of their own minds, and their ignorance of the true nature of that gospel purity which the apostle is so careful to impress upon the minds of the Corinthian christians.

"Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me," saith the apostle; "*It is good for a man not to touch a woman.*" Having laid down this principle at the beginning of the chapter, he could not reverse it without involving himself in a contradiction. 'For," as he said on another occasion, "if I build again the things 'which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor."* Nor is there the least evidence to be found, in any of his writings, that he ever ceased to give the preference to a virgin life; altho the time was not then come for a full manifestation of the truth on this subject.

"It is good for a man not to touch *a wife*. *But because of the 'fornications,* let every man have his own wife, and let every 'woman have her own husband."† This is the extent of the apostle's toleration; and he affirms that he spoke this by permission, and not of commandment. And why this permission? Evidently because of the uncontrollable passions of many among these Corinthians, whom the apostle calls carnal, and who, previous to their conversion to christianity, had been accustomed to a plurality of wives, and whose licentious habits, even after their conversion, could hardly be controlled within the bounds of moral decency,

* Gal ii. 18.

† The reader will perceive that the Italic words in this quotation, do not agree with our common translation; but they accord with the literal meaning of the original Greek, in which the apostle wrote. Γυναικος, the word translated *woman* in the 1st verse, means *wife*, and is the same as that translated *wife* in the 2d, 3d and 4th verses. The 2d verse in the Greek begins with these words; Διὰ δε τας πορνειας, which are literally rendered thus; *But because of the fornications.* The word *to avoid* is not in the Greek, but was inserted by the translators.

notwithstanding all the apostle's permissions and indulgences. But all these indulgences, which modern christians so readily arrogate to themselves, to justify their lascivious practices, cannot alter the nature of holiness, nor lessen our obligations to follow Christ's example.

It is contended by many, that the apostle gave his instructions in favor of a virgin life by permission only; but the fact is directly the reverse; nor is there any deviation, in all his writings, from the principle laid down in the first verse of this chapter; and every indulgence permitted to the Corinthians, was evidently on account of their weakness. It would have been very extraordinary indeed for the apostle to recommend continence and virgin purity by permission, or grant it as an indulgence, when every feeling of the carnal nature of man was wholly opposed to it. Nor would ten thousand such permissions ever induce one *carnally minded* soul to take up such a cross; nor would he ever take it up so long as he could find the least hope of salvation without it. The apostle's permission therefore, was not in behalf of those who were willing to take up their crosses; but in behalf of those who chose rather to indulge the flesh than to cross it. And the plain reason why these permissions and indulgences were suffered in that day, was, that the day of full redemption was not then come; and therefore a full and final cross against those indulgences, could not then be absolutely required. But the apostle told them plainly what was the best way; and those who had spiritual discernment enough to prize a life of purity followed the apostle's advice.

Again it is said that, "the present distress," mentioned by the apostle, alluded to outward afflictions, occasioned by persecution. But this is not true; nor can any evidence be produced, either from sacred or profane history, to warrant such a conclusion; but on the contrary, the time when the apostle wrote this epistle, appears to have been a time of the greatest tranquillity the primitive church ever enjoyed; nor has the apostle given the least hint that persecution was the cause of that precept. The real cause was the uncontrollable passions of these carnal professors, which the apostle strove to keep within some bounds, by certain permissions and indulgences, in a lawful way; otherwise they would have been ensnared by the devil and their own lusts, and led into fornication and adultery. That this was the real state of many among these Corinthians, will appear very evident on examining the third, fifth and sixth chapters of this same epistle. Yet that there were some among them who were spiritually minded, appears evident by their writing to the apostle on this subject; and his answer is a clear proof that many evils had got in among them.

We do not disagree with the apostle, that those who cannot, or will not abstain from fornication, would do better to marry and

confine themselves to one wife, and become orderly members of civil society, than to continue in the practice of promiscuous debauchery. But a thousand indulgences to carnal men and women, can never purify the nature of lust, nor purge it out of the soul. The marriage of the world still belongs to the first Adam, and not to the second; to the kingdoms of this world, and not to the Kingdom of Christ. This appears evident from the apostle's own testimony in this same discourse, from which carnal christians draw so much indulgence to please the flesh. Why do they not see the distinction?

"He that is married, careth for the things that are of the world, "how he may please his wife." Also, "she that is married, car-"eth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband." But the unmarried, or those who live a virgin life,* "care for the "things of the Lord, how they may be holy, both in body and in "spirit." Here we see the principle of a holy life directly pointed out; therefore let those who desire holiness, follow it. "I would that all men were even as I myself," says the apostle, who himself was not married. "I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I."

7. But after all the apostle's permissions and indulgences to the Corinthians, whom he declares to be "carnal," he points them to a future day in which all these indulgences must cease; when carnal gratifications, separate possessions, and whatever else among chrisitans pertained to the customs and manners of a selfish world, must be done away in the church of Christ; and a more inward and spiritual work be wrought in the soul, and a new order of things succeed in the church.

"But this I say, brethren, The time is short. It remaineth, 'that both they that have wives, be as tho they had none; and 'they that weep, as tho they wept not; and they that rejoice, as 'tho they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as tho they possessed 'not; and they that use this world as not abusing it; for the 'fashion of this world passeth away."

Some have supposed that the apostle alluded to a state beyond the grave; but a little reflection will show the inconsistency of this supposition. To make it consistent, they must also suppose that the practice of buying and using this world is likewise to be carried beyond the grave. But this they themselves would hardly believe. The truth is, that passage points directly to the second coming of Christ, and the established order of his Kingdom on earth, in which the apostle evidently foresaw that a final cross against the carnal indulgence of the flesh, would put an end to that use which had hitherto been made of wives: That those who had

* It is evident that the apostle here alluded to those who really lived a virgin life for Christ's sake and the gospel's, and not to those who were merely unmarried, and yet lived in carnal indulgences.

them, would enjoy them as sisters in Christ, and not as wives i Adam: That the church of Christ, by being separated from th world, and united in spirit, would possess a united interest, whic would preclude all buying and selling for individual and selfis purposes; and that thereby a right use of property would tak place in the church, where the things of this world would be use without abuse: And that, in this period, believers, under the ope ration of an inward, spiritual work of God upon the soul, woul both weep and rejoice in spirit, without discovering the feeling and exercises of their souls to the view of an unbelieving world.

Having seen, felt and experienced all these things, we are abl to testify that no other meaning can, with any consistency, be ap plied to the apostle's prediction. So clearly indeed has he pointe out the millennial Church, in that short passage, that its faith an order could not be more completely described, in so few words notwithstanding the work has actually taken place. And we bles God that we have lived to see the day in which it is so clearly an amply fulfilled; that the true virgin life is made manifest in thi our day, and we are called to be partakers of it; that we ca "possess this world as tho we possessed it not;" for we know tha "the fashion of this world *is passed away*," as it respects the live which we live in it.

8. "And I looked, and lo! a Lamb stood on the mount Sion "and with him a hundred forty and four thousand, having hi "Father's name written in their foreheads."* This is not a mer external name, consisting of significant letters or characters; bu the pure nature of God being formed in them, the very image o purity and holiness shines forth in their countenances, and display itself in all their words and actions. But who are these hundre and forty-four thousand? "These are they which were not defile with women; for they are virgins."

Some suppose this to include that particular number only, wh will attain to that honor. Be this as it may, it is a striking evidenc that none but those who live a virgin life can obtain so great privilege; and therefore such a life must not only be the most ac ceptable in the sight of God and the Lamb, but is that alone whic can stand with the Lamb on Mount Zion.

"These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." That is, they walk in perfect obedience to the law of Christ, an follow his example in all purity and holiness; not defiling them selves with women, nor living in any uncleanness, or in any selfis gratification whatever.

"These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruit unto God, and to the Lamb." Having followed Christ in the re generation; that is, having lived a life of virgin purity, after hi

* Rev. xiv. 1.

xample, by taking up their crosses against all those carnal indul-ences of the flesh which pertain to the works of generation, they ere redeemed from that nature by the regenerating power of the Ioly Spirit.

"And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without ult before the throne of God." They have taken up their crosses gainst all sin, and every evil word and work; and by their obedi-nce to the law of Christ, have obtained a victory over the very ature of evil: for how could they otherwise be without fault? uch, and such only, are with the Lamb.* And the song which ey sing, is a song of praise and thanksgiving to God for their edemption, and which cannot be sung except by those who, rough a life of virgin purity, have obtained complete redemption om the lost nature of the flesh.

In this vision of John, is a prophetic display of the true charac-r of the work of God on earth, in the great millennial day of hrist, which is, as it were, but just commenced. And these irgin characters above described, are the subjects of it: and none ill finally be able to stand the test of this great day, without be-oming the subjects of this work, and attaining to this character. hus we have John's vision of the appearance of the Lamb on Iount Zion and the character of those with him; then follows his ision of the everlasting gospel.

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of Heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

Here we find that the gospel is preached, after the appearance f the Lamb on Mount Zion. This is an evidence, not only that he gospel is to be preached after the second coming of Christ, ut also that those to whom it is to be preached had no previous nowledge of his having made his appearance; but are yet to be nformed of it by the testimony of the preacher. After this suc-eeds the fall of Babylon, and the judgment of God upon those ho worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark.

These things show that, after the second coming of Christ, the ospel will be preached to all nations, kindreds and tongues; and at those who refuse to obey it, and still continue in the course nd practice of the world, will inevitably fall under the judgment f God, both in this world and that which is to come. For the oud voice of the angel alludes to the preaching of the gospel to a nful world, by ministers sent of God, with angelic or heavenly ower and authority. After this follows the harvest of the world.

* Those who live in sin, tho they may call themselves christians, they cannot be "without ult before the throne of God," and therefore cannot belong to this class: And tho they y "name the name of Christ;" yet if they do not "depart from all iniquity," all their igious professions, forms and ceremonies are but mere hypocrisy; their mouths are full guile, full of lies and hypocrisy.

"And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and upon the clou
"one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golde
"crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel can
"out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat o
"the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap; for the time is com
"for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

It will be proper to remark here, that the work of harvest, whic
is a progressive work, is a striking figure of the work of Christ
second appearing, which is called *The harvest of the world.* A
a field of wheat is not cut down with one stroke of the sickle; b
that which is the ripest is first cut down and gathered, and th
reaping continued, as the grain becomes ripe, till all is cut dow
separated and gathered into the barn; so is the harvest of th
world, in the day of Christ's second appearing.

The *white cloud* represents a cloud or multitude of pure witne
ses, those who stand on Mount Zion with the Lamb. The Spir
of Christ in these witnesses, is the sharp sickle, which goes forr
by the word of their testimony, through the preaching of the eve
lasting gospel, which cuts off and separates souls from the life
the world; and thus they are harvested out of the world; so th
their life is no longer of the world, but of Christ. Thus the pri
ciple of a virgin life is implanted in them: "for they are virgins.
Therefore they can, henceforth, no more propagate a natural of
spring than the grain that is gathered into the barn, and devote
to be made into bread, for the use of the owner, can be again sow
in the earth and bring forth fruit.

The progress of the work here described will fulfil the pr
diction of Christ; "This gospel of the Kingdom shall be preache
"in all the world, for a witness unto all nations: and then sha
"the end come."*

CHAPTER III.

Concerning Obedience.

The first duty which God requires of man, and in which
comprehended all other duties, is *obedience.* This is essentiall
necessary for the fulfilment of the whole law of Christ, and indee
of every manifestation of God to man. "Behold, to obey is be
ter than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."† This
the whole end and design of the law of nature, the law of Mose
and the law of Christ. Thus said Moses; "Keep therefore th
"words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in a
"that ye do."‡ And thus said Jesus; "Not every one that sait
"unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven
"but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven."‖

* Matt. xxiv. 14. † 1 Sam. xv. 22. ‡ Deut. xxix. 9. ‖ Matt. vii. 21.

Hence it is evident that obedience is the only line of promise. A man may believe all the law and the prophets; he may also believe the truth of the gospel, he may assent to all its doctrines, and do every principle of the law of Christ; and he may not only have full faith in the divine mission of Christ, and call him Lord and Master, and acknowledge him as the only Savior; but he may also openly profess the name of Christ, and declare his full belief in all his divine precepts, and acknowledge his life and example to be the only rule of a christian; and yet after all, if he does not truly and sincerely obey the revealed will of God, given to him, all his faith and all his professions will profit him nothing. Obedience therefore comprehends the whole duty of man.

But it may be asked, Where is the true object of obedience to be found? to whom, and to what shall we yield obedience? and by what rule shall it be regulated? To which we answer: The Spirit of Christ is the true and real object of obedience: and its visible manifestation is found in his body, which is his true Church. There he has placed his name, and there is found the only power of salvation; because therein his Spirit operates and governs the whole body: hence the only true source and object of obedience is in the Church of Christ; and the obedience of every faithful soul will center there.

Christ said to his disciples, "I am the vine, ye are the branches."* It is well known that the branches of the vine, or of a tree, are subject, in all their operations and productions, to the directions of that life which proceeds from the body. This supports and regulates them: and no branch can bear fruit, nor even receive any support from the life of the tree, when it is separated from it, or has by any means lost its connection with the life of the body. For tho a branch that is withered may continue to hang on the tree for a time; yet if it cannot receive the sap, which is the life of the tree, it must finally fall off; because it is no longer subject to the life of the body, and therefore that life can no longer circulate in it. So it is also with the members of the human body, which are supported by its life, and regulated and governed by the head, as the leading influence of the whole body. No member, when cut off from the body, can retain its life, nor its subjection to the head; but having lost its union and subjection to the life of the body, it must die.

Here then, is the most perfect figure of visible obedience, tho proceeding from an invisible source. And shall we suppose that the body of Christ can be less perfect, in its system of obedience, than the vine or the tree, or even the members of the human body? Jesus Christ, when on earth, taught the will of his Father; this constituted the pure principles of the gospel: and he confirmed

* John xv. 5.

these principles by his living example. But these principles wer not obeyed by those who did not belong to his visible body; n had he any leading influence any where but in his body, and those members who composed his body. "Now ye are the boo of Christ, and members in particular," saith the apostle.*

Thus the body of Christ is made up of visible members, an his invisible Spirit is their life. This Spirit cannot direct th members to disagree one with another, or to be separated fro their union to each other. Hence it is evident that clashing opi ions, jarring systems, and opposite conduct do not belong to th one body of Christ, nor have they any part in it. If Christ has true church on earth, then that church must be his visible bod therefore his invisible Spirit must be the life of that body, and course, must regulate and govern it. Hence we may see the gre mistake of those who suppose that they can belong to the body Christ, or that they can partake of his Spirit, which is its life, a yet have no union with his church, his only visible body. It utterly impossible for any one, in such a state, to partake of th life of Christ. As well might the branches of the vine or tree, even the members of the human body, when cut off and separate still partake of the life of the body.

Many objections have been raised against the system of obed ence taught and practised in the United Society; but to the cand mind, a little reflection will show those objections to be very u reasonable. It will doubtless be readily acknowledged, that every well regulated society or institution, there must be a visib head, or leading influence, by which the society or institution governed and directed, and to which each member must yie obedience; otherwise there could be no order nor regulation such a society; for a body without a head, can have neither li nor power, but must soon fall and be dissolved. But where the is a leading influence, which stands as a center of union, the orde union and harmony of the institution is easily preserved, by t obedience of the members to that head or leading influence.

In a regular army of soldiers, perfect obedience is found esse tially necessary for the preservation of order, and the protection the army. And as order and discipline is the strength of the arm so obedience is the very life of order and discipline. Every soldi is required to yield implicit obedience to his immediate comman er, and every officer must be subject to the command of his superi officer. This order of subjection extends, in regular gradatio from the common soldier to the highest officer in an army; a thus the whole army is led and governed by the commander chief. Without this subjection, the largest army would soon lo all its strength and power, and become an easy conquest to t enemy.

* 1 Cor. xii. 27.

There is, however, this essential difference between the dessola-ng armies of blood-shedding warriors, and the harmless followers f the Prince of Peace. The former are governed by the compul-ion of arbitrary power, and the severity of military laws; while he latter are led and governed by the law of Christ, under the ild and gentle, yet powerful influence of the spirit of peace and ve; and by the infusion of that divine spirit into all the members, becomes the delight of all to be united in their obedience to that ivine law, which is implanted in the heart of every honest and ithful leader, and by which the whole body is led and governed the most perfect harmony.

It is for the want of this united spirit, this oneness of heart and ind, to govern and direct an army of contending warriors, that its trength and power must be supported, and its order and discipline aintained by the severity of arbitrary power. Consequently the oldier whose heart is not devoted to the cause in which he is en-aged, who can feel no delight in the life of a soldier, so as to ren-er a willing obedience to his commanding officer, becomes the lave of arbitrary power under a tyrannical leader, and is under he dire necessity of living a life of wretchedness in the army, here he is liable to be compelled to acts which he abhors, or azard his life by his disobedience; and yet even his obedience annot secure him from a violent and untimely death. But not so the Church of Christ, where every faithful member is of one eart and one soul, and where one spirit leads and governs the hole body. Here no compulsion, no arbitrary power is found ecessary.

Again: The order of nature requires that children should be bedient to their parents; that the younger children should respect nd conform to the elder.* Without this, there can be no well egulated family; confusion must necessarily ensue, and "a house ivided against itself cannot stand." The Church of Christ is a piritual family; and as it is composed of visible members, there

* Thousands of children run the road to ruin in consequence of being rought up in disobedience to their parents. This fault generally lies ith the parents, or with those who have the charge of their earliest ears; either because they are not governed by the principles of moral-y, in their instructions, or because they do not implant the principle f obedience in the minds of their children. Children who are not ught obedience to their parents, from their infancy, according to the der of nature, and do not practice it, are generally found to be more nwilling than others, to yield obedience to the calls of the gospel, and he spiritual work of God in riper years, even tho they should be fully onvinced of the necessity of it. Such children, being left to follow their wn corrupt inclinations, are apt to become regardless of all law and l government, except the government of their perverse wills; and herefore will neither be subject to the laws of God nor man, without bsolute compulsion.

must be a visible head, to stand as the center of influence or lead ing power in that family. As the leading power of the visibl church is vested in the Ministry, as the visible head; so in eac separate family of the Society, which is considered as a branch the church, the leading power is vested in the elders who are con sidered as the heads of their respective families. And so long a the visible head or leaders of any family conduct themselves in manner worthy of this trust, it is necessary that they should b obeyed by all the members of the family. Without this obedienc there can be no regulation, order nor harmony in the family.

But no one is required to yield obedience to any thing contrar to the established principles of the gospel, as revealed by the pr cepts and example of Jesus Christ; but obedience is required conformity to those principles only. This is agreeable to the do trine taught by Mother Ann. "You ought to have your fai "grounded in the power of God;" said she; "for that abide "forever. But if your faith is only in creatures, and they shou "fail, you are liable to come under loss." True faith leads to ob dience.

Many will profess great union and submission to the Spirit Christ, and yet object to a visible leader in the church. They a looking for Christ to reveal himself, as an invisible guide an teacher, to every individual, in a separate capacity, without an dependence upon the union of the body; and expect to be guide by the invisible spirit of Christ, in their own souls, separately, an independent of any visible leader. But this doctrine is contra to every manifestation of the dealings of God with man, and is ca culated to destroy the union and harmony of the church, by re dering every individual independent of the body.

But no person can be united to Christ, and yet be at varian with the members of his body. And while the true members Christ's church are governed by his Spirit, they can have no o jections against visible leaders: "For God is not the author confusion, but of peace." Therefore, if the Spirit of Christ ru in his church, (which cannot reasonably be denied,) that Spi will bring forward those who are the most suitable for leaders, a remove them when they can be no longer useful, and supply the places with others better qualified for that duty. Obedience therefore always safe as well as necessary.

But the great and common objection against visible spiritu leaders in the church of Christ, to whom all the members must subject, appears to be this; "That the scriptures of the Old a New Testament contain all the necessary instructions for the chr tian's conduct through life, and are the only rule of faith a practice." If this be so, we would ask why are spiritual teach appointed in almost every religious society? We are told that t is necessary in order to open and explain the scriptures, and gi

the people a right understanding of them, and to exhort them to obedience, not to the teachers, but to the scriptures. But why then do these scripture expositors differ so much from each other in their sentiments? and why have their discordant opinions produced so many jarring systems of religion throughout the world? In order to be able expositors of the scriptures, they ought to possess a goodly portion of that Spirit which dictated the scriptures; otherwise they explain to no good purpose.

If these expositors were in real possession of the Spirit of Christ, they would not disagree about the meaning of the scriptures, nor concerning the duty of christians; but they would be of one heart and one mind, and would, of course, minister the same oneness of spirit to all those members of their church who faithfully adhered to their instructions. And hence there could be but one faith and one baptism among them, namely, the faith of Christ, and the baptism of the Holy Spirit; and this would unite them together, as one body, led and governed by one spirit. Then every faithful member of their church would feel the necessity of obedience, and would readily practice it from a principle of love and duty to that Divine Spirit which would then appear visible in the lives of their teachers. And these teachers, being the true ministers of Christ, would then teach them that one faith, and baptize them with that one baptism, which is the very life of the body of Christ.

But the truth is, while they profess to teach others, they themselves have need to be taught the first principles of the law of Christ, which necessarily includes obedience. Hence it is, that in their attempts to explain the scriptures, they have no spiritual guide; but are led by the dictates of human reason and human wisdom, which they themselves will acknowledge to be fallible; of course, all their instructions must be fallible. And hence also, they are at all times liable to put wrong interpretations upon the scriptures; and that this has long been practiced among them, their numerous systems of religion afford a very striking proof.

Many will plead, that the obedience of Christ is sufficient for all; and will quote the apostle's words: "For as by one man's "disobedience, many were made sinners; so, by the obedience of "one, shall many be made righteous." But if they rightly understood this passage, they would find it to be no argument in favor of their plea. It is by following Adam's example of disobedience, that *many are made sinners;* and so also, by following Christ's example of obedience, *many are made righteous.* By the disobedience of the first Adam, he received a corrupt seed, and this corrupt seed, which contained the evil influence of the *wicked one*, has been communicated to his posterity by natural generation; and they, by obeying this evil influence, become sinners. So, by the obedience of Jesus Christ, the second Adam, he received the seed

of eternal life from God; and this seed, which contains the power of salvation, is communicated by spiritual regeneration, to all who are willing to receive it; and they, by obeying the influence of that power, received through faith, become righteous. Thus the apostle's expression is verified; and thus we may see that, in order to be made righteous, we must be obedient, even as he was.

As man first fell from a state of rectitude, and lost his union and relation to God, *by disobedience;* so he must rise from his lost state, and find his union and relation to Christ, *by obedience.* Short of this, no soul will ever find salvation, and secure an inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven.

CHAPTER IV.

The Confession of Sin.

As man, in his fallen state, is in the kingdom of darkness, and under the government of the prince of this world, who is a prince of darkness; so his introduction into the Kingdom of Christ, which is a kingdom of light, must depend on his coming to the light, and renouncing all the works of darkness. And as all sin, and all manner of wickedness, are the works or deeds of darkness; so the first step towards walking in the light, is to bring these deeds to the light.* And the only manner in which these evil deeds can be brought to the light and truly made manifest, is by confession.

The open confession of sin to the witnesses of Christ, was practiced in the primitive church, and was considered as the first necessary step for the admission of the sinner to the privileges of the gospel, and the only door of entrance into the church of Christ. But the subsequent innovations and scandalous abuses of this doctrine, in the church of Rome, have rendered it obnoxious in the eyes of all the protestant sectaries. And when these innovations and abuses are duly considered, it cannot be a matter of surprise that the doctrine was rejected; for who could reasonably suppose that Jesus Christ or his apostles could ever authorize or sanction such abominations? Besides, the money exacted by the papal clergy, for the pretended pardon of sins, was a heavy tax upon the people, who found it much cheaper, as well as much more agreeable to their feelings, to conceal their iniquities, than to confess them at so great an expense.

Hence the rejection of this doctrine by the protestant reformers, met the popular feeling; and a general belief soon prevailed, that the doctrine itself was the invention of the Romish church, and was purposely designed to draw money from the people. This belief still prevails; and so strong is the prejudice against the doc-

* See John iii. 19, 20, 21.

trine, that among all classes of protestant professors, wherever it is mentioned, the general cry is, *This is rank popery—I don't believe in confessing sins to man—We must confess our sins to God alone, and not to man.* And indeed, such scandalous abuses of a divine principle, given in tender mercy to lost man, were sufficient to destroy the faith of the multitude, and create unbelief in the principle, wherever these abuses were known.

But the abuse of a divine institution proves nothing against the institution itself. In this case, it ought to be considered as an evidence of its divine origin: for it was evidently a knowledge that this was an institution maintained in the primitive church, that enabled the catholic clergy to support its authority, after they had so basely corrupted it. For no man, in his rational senses, could be brought to believe that his sins could be pardoned for money, if he were not first led into a full belief, founded on something more than human authority, that the practice of confessing sin before the witnesses of God, was an institution of Divine appointment; and therefore supposed he must do it, even if he was obliged, on account of clerical avarice, to pay out his money for the privilege.*

But this gracious principle, tho it had been so much and so long abused in the church of Antichrist, was renewed in all its purity, in the very commencement of the work of God which gave rise to the United Society. And it was followed by such evident displays of Divine Power, as to carry the most powerful conviction in favor of its divine origin. And all who received faith in the testimony, and honestly confessed their sins, were blessed, in their obedience, with an overcoming power over all sin, and felt a living witness in their own souls, that this testimony was, in very deed, the testimony of God. They did not feel as tho they were confessing their sins to man, but to God, in the presence of his witnesses; and they were fully convinced that they could not find access to God in any other way. And this testimony has been maintained to this day, as the first principle of obedience to the law of Christ. It was a doctrine continually enjoined by our first parents in the gospel; and often, when people came to confess their sins, they were reminded of the sense they ought to have of it, in the following words: "Remember, if you confess your sins, you must confess them to "God: we are but his witnesses."

That sinners are required to confess their sins in the presence of God's witnesses, in order to find the forgiveness of God; and that this is both scriptural and rational, and the only true order of confession, will appear evident from the following considerations.

* Just so many, at the present day, feel it their duty to attend the assemblies of those who profess to worship God on the sabbath, because it was an institution of the primitive church, even tho, in its present corrupted state, they are obliged to purchase this privilege, and pay out their money to *a hireling preacher, who professes to preach a free gospel without money and without price!*

1. We presume it will not be denied that all mankind are born into the world with a sinful nature. And it is equally true that all who arrive at the age of maturity, and are capable of discerning between good and evil, find that this nature brings forth, in them the fruits of actual sin. Hence it is generally admitted by all professors of religion, that a confession of sin, of some sort, is necessary, in order to find forgiveness and acceptance with God. But there is a wide difference of opinion respecting the manner in which this confession ought to be made. Many contend for a secret confession to God alone. But we would ask, where is the sinner's assurance that he can find God in the secret chamber, and make confession to his acceptance? We read that "The sacrifice of the "wicked is an abomination to the Lord; but the prayer of the "upright is his delight." Again: "The Lord is far from the "wicked; but he heareth the prayer of the righteous."* And again "If I regard iniquity in my heart," saith David, "the Lord will "not hear me."†

We find that, in all ages of the world, the established order of God's intercourse with man, has been through the agency of man. And altho, in many instances, there have been occasional manifestations of the Divine Spirit to individuals, revealed in various manners; yet none could ever be brought into covenant relation with God's chosen people, without living agents, selected for that purpose. Witness the case of Saul of Tarsus, Cornelius the centurion and others, who, tho they were called by a manifestation of Divine light, could not be brought into fellowship with the body of God's chosen people, without the agency of living witnesses belonging to that body.

Nor do we find that God ever held any immediate intercourse with mankind, at large, or with any body of people, as such; but he has always revealed himself through the agency of certain individuals, whom he had chosen as messengers of his will to others, and the people were always required to learn the will of God from these individuals, as agents or witnesses of God, and to find access to God through them. And it is worthy of particular remark that God has always chosen his agents from among the most honest and upright, or those who have come the nearest to him in the works of righteousness. Witness Noah, Abraham, Moses, Samuel and the prophets, who were all chosen as the agents of God, to do his work and reveal his will, and to stand between him and the people.

We find also, that wherever God has had a covenant people who have walked in his statutes, and have kept themselves from those pollutions in which the rest of mankind have lived, there he has placed his name, and there he has been found, and there he

* Prov. xv 8 & 29. † Psa. lxvi, 18.

must always be found, if any where; because there is his true and only habitation on earth; and there he has placed the only treasures of Heaven that ever were, or ever can be found on earth by fallen man. And all souls who ever find access to God, and obtain an inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven, must obtain it through such a medium.

The power of salvation and eternal life is too precious to be scattered promiscuously, in every direction, and among all sorts of people, without regard to their state and situation, and other circumstances. It was purchased by Jesus Christ, at a great price; and he never could have purchased it, with all the sufferings he passed through, had he not lived a perfectly sinless life in the mean time. Therefore it is a treasure infinitely precious in the sight of God; and altho, as the apostle saith, "we have this treasure in earthen vessels;" yet these vessels must be pure and clean; nor can it ever be conveyed to mankind in any other. Nor indeed can any one ever obtain this treasure, without first casting out all the Devil's treasure out of his soul, (that is, all his sins,) by an honest and free confession, and thereby purifying himself from all uncleanness, that he may become a fit vessel to receive this treasure.

2. As all the secret actions of men are open and known to God; therefore a confession made in secret, tho professedly made to God, can bring nothing to the light; and the sinner may, perhaps, have as little fear of God, in confessing his sins in this manner, as he had in committing them. And as nothing is brought to the light by confessing his sins in this manner, he feels no cross in it; nor does he thereby find any mortification to that carnal nature which first led him into sin; and is therefore as liable to run again into the same acts of sin, as he was before his confession.

But let the sinner appear in the presence of a faithful servant of Christ, and there confess, honestly, his every secret sin, one by one, of whatever nature or name, and faithfully lay open his whole life, without any covering or disguise; and he will then feel a humiliating sense of himself, in the presence of God, in a manner which he never experienced before. He will then, in very deed, find a mortifying cross to his carnal nature, and feel the crucifixion of his lust and pride where he never did before. He will then perceive the essential difference between confessing his sins in the dark, where no mortal ear can hear him, and actually bringing his evil deeds to the light of one individual child of God; and he will then be convinced that a confession made before the light of God, in one of his true witnesses, can bring upon him a more awful sense of his accountability, both to God and man, than all his confessions in darkness had ever done.

3. It must appear obvious to every reflecting mind, that the spirit which leads the sinner to commit sin, and keep it concealed,

is directly contrary to that which leads him to confess it. And it is equally obvious that the sinner, if he must confess his sins, would much rather confess them in secret, to an unknown God, whom he cannot fear, because he does not know him, than to confess them to a fellow being, whom he believes to be a true and faithful servant of God. Thus the sinner can easily unite with the spirit of darkness, which conceals his sins, while he feels a conscious dread of the spirit of light which exposes them. And herein we find a powerful evidence, that the spirit of wickedness in man, hates an open confession of sin, while it is willing to submit to a secret one.

It must also be admitted, that no person could ever be induced to appear before a real child of God, and there make an honest and open confession of all his sins, but from a principle of uprightness and sincerity. And under the influence of such a principle, he could not conceal any, not even those which were the most infamous and debasing to his character; for such a principle is totally opposite to that which would induce him to keep his sins concealed. And as it is the nature and disposition of all wicked people, even of the most abandoned characters, to keep their wickedness concealed from the righteous; so we may judge from thence, which principle is the most consistent with the pure light of God, and most agreeable to righteousness and truth, that which leads to an honest confession, or that which leads to concealment, and endeavors to plead justification in making secret confessions to God alone.

4. It is well known that many people, when under a deep conviction of sin, in consequence of the intolerable burden of their sins, are anxious to find some kind and confidential friend, who is a godly person, to whom they can freely unburthen their minds. At such times, a secret confession cannot satisfy them; they are desirous to make an honest and full confession of their sins to some one whom they believe to be a faithful servant of God. And the more confidence they can feel that such a one is a true witness of God, the greater will be their hope of relief.

Many persons on their deathbeds, feeling sensible that they must die, and knowing that they have lived without hope and without God in the world, have been greatly alarmed at their situation, and with an awful sense of their sins staring them in the face, they have been constrained to pour out their wicked lives, by confessing their sins to any one that would hear them. Many criminals also, whose crimes have brought them to the end of their wicked career, seeing that they were just about to enter the eternal world, without any hope of pardon, have been suddenly awakened to a feeling sense of the just judgment and condemnation before them; and under an intolerable load of guilt, have been ready to cry out and confess their sins, without the least restraint, before the surrounding multitude.

These things are the evident effects of the spirit of judgment om God, operating upon the soul. And while they present to ankind a figurative display of the awful situation of souls in des- ir, under the guilt and condemnation of their sins, they at the me time, point out the only means of deliverance from sin. nd would mankind but seriously attend to such awful monitions these, they might thence learn what sort of a confession God re- ires of sinners, and be thereby induced to confess their sins to s witnesses, while the day of grace endures.

5. The law of Moses contains a clear testimony of the true der of confession which God required of sinners in that day. By at law they were required to confess their particular sins before e priest or elders of the people. "If a soul sin, and commit any of these things which are forbidden to be done by the command- ments of the Lord, he is guilty, and shall bear his iniquity.—And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned *in that thing*. And he shall bring his trespass-offering unto the Lord, for his sin which he hath sinned; and the priest shall make an atonement for him concerning his sin."* These offerings were so particularly specified that, in any cases, the offering itself pointed out the particular sin which d been committed.

Hence it appears that, according to the law, every sin was to be ade manifest to the elders of the people. And can it be consis- nt for christians, under the light of the gospel, to keep their sins ore covered in the dark than the Jews were allowed to do under e law? If so, how can they "walk in the light as Christ is in e light?" Or how can they "have fellowship one with another?"†

6. The order of confession which God requires of sinners, under e light of the gospel, was clearly pointed out by the case of chan, in the time of Joshua. When Achan had transgressed in the accursed thing," and was taken by lot, Joshua said to him, My son, give I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel, and make confession unto him, and tell me now what thou hast done; hide it not from me."‡

Joshua was a type of Jesus Christ, and then stood as the visible der of Israel; he was therefore the proper person to hear Achan's nfession. By the means of this confession the sin was put away om the camp, and the favor of God was restored to Israel. he place of this transaction was ever after called "The valley of *chor*;" that is, *The valley of trouble*.|| The promise afterwards ven by the prophet Hosea, that "the valley of Achor" should be a door of hope," had a direct allusion to this transaction, which as a figure designed to show the true order of the confession of

* Lev. v. 17. and 5, 6. † See 1 John i, 7. ‡ Josh. vii. 19.

|| *Achor* in Hebrew signifies *trouble*.

sin under the gospel dispensation, and teaches us that when sou by the conviction of their sins, are brought into the valley trouble, a door of hope is there opened to them, by an honest c fession of their sins; and the manner of this confession was, in valley of Achor, plainly pointed out.

Achan's transgression was brought to light by his confessi and the sin was purged out of the camp of Israel. But as the pensation of the law was not the dispensation of mercy, but judgment, it required the immediate execution of the offender, an equivalent sacrifice, as the only means of atonement for s And as Achan's transgression was of an extraordinary nature, equivalent sacrifice could be found; therefore judgment was e cuted upon him, and his body was destroyed.* This was a fi rative representation of the body of sin, which, under the gos dispensation, is to be brought to light by confession, and destroy by the operation of the law of Christ.

The lot by which Achan was taken and convicted, was figu tive of the power of conviction, which awakens souls, and ca the lot of condemnation upon them, and as it were, arraigns th before the bar of judgment, where they must feel the just judgm and condemnation of their own consciences, until they are willi to confess their sins before the witnesses of God, as Achan d Tho Achan was discovered as a transgressor by the lot; yet t sin which he had committed was brought to light, with all its c cumstances, by his own confession. This was a figurative displ of that sin-searching work in the gospel, which will continue u the final cleansing and separation of all sin from the camp of t saints, the true Israel of God, according to his promise; "I w search Jerusalem with candles."†

7. Among other striking figures which had reference to the c fession of sin, or to that work of judgment which was to pur souls from sin, and cleanse them from evil, we shall notice t River Jordan, and some remarkable circumstances connected w it. The name *Jordan* signifies *River of Judgment*, or *Descendi River*, as some have interpreted it.‡ And it is worthy of parti lar remark, that the situation of this river, and the peculiar wo of God that took place in it, at different times, typified the manr in which man must descend into the work of judgment, and t absolute necessity of such a work; as will appear from the follo ing circumstances.

1. The River Jordan was the boundary of the land of Cana on the side towards the wilderness, through which the Israeli

* As this dispensation was figurative, it could not decide Achan's future state; that to be the work of the gospel in a future day.

† Zeph. i. 12

‡ It was doubtless used in both senses; for in the Hebrew, as in other languages, same word is often used to express different ideas.

ravelled to the promised land; and they could not enter into the promised land, without descending into this river and passing through it. By this it was clearly typified, that man must descend into the work of judgment, and pass through that work, before he can enter and take possession of the promised inheritance of the saints.

2. When John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way for the ushering in of the work of the Messiah, "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord," the people who received his mission, came, "and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." This evidently pointed out the manner in which souls must be brought to judgment, in order to prepare them to enter into the work of Christ's Kingdom; that is, by honestly confessing their sins, and passing through the baptism of repentance. This work is *the river of judgment* through which souls must pass, and without which they can no more enter the true spiritual Canaan, the promised inheritance of the saints, than the Israelites could enter the land of Canaan without descending and passing through the River Jordan.

3. The case of Naaman the Syrian, who was cleansed from his leprosy by washing in the River Jordan, was a striking figure of the manner in which souls were to be cleansed from the guilt of sin. The plague of leprosy was considered, under the law, as the most unclean disease of any that could come upon any person; and was therefore a particular figure of the polluted and unclean state of a soul spotted with sin. When Naaman came to the prophet Elisha to be cleansed from his leprosy, the prophet sent a messenger to him, saying, "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean."* But this message was offensive to Naaman's proud and exalted feelings: he had rather wash in the rivers of his own country. Yet he could not be cleansed till he was obedient; and therefore, when he had humbled himself, and washed as he was directed, "his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child." Thus he received the promise and was cleansed.

Herein was plainly prefigured the message which God sends to sinners: Go wash in the river of judgment; that is, confess your sins and be baptized with repentance, and ye shall become as little children, and be clean. But how contrary is this message to the exalted nature of man! He had much rather seek religion among the formal professors of his own land, where this duty is not required; where they confess their sins in the dark, and wash in their own rivers, or in other words, chuse their own ways of making themselves christians. But debasing as it may feel to high-minded and self-sufficient souls to become as little children, and

* 2 Kings v. 10.

come down to the real work of judgment, by confessing their si to the true witnesses of God; yet they can no more be cleans from sin without passing through this work, than Naaman cou be cleansed from his leprosy without washing in Jordan.

8. We find the open confession of sin evidently enjoined an plainly supported by many passages of scripture. "He that co "ereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and fo "saketh them shall have mercy."* No one will pretend that h can cover his sins from the All-seeing eye of God; yet here is covering spoken of, which evidently alludes to concealing the from the witnesses of God, whom he hath sent to proclaim th light of the glorious gospel, "and preach the baptism of repentan for the remission of sins."†

Agreeable to the testimony of Christ, "There is nothing cove "ed that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not "known."‡ It is certain that nothing can be revealed witho being brought to the light. But where is the light, and what is i This was plainly revealed by Christ, when he said to his disciple "Ye are the light of the world."|| If the followers of Christ a the light of the world, then those who walk in darkness must con to those whom Christ has declared to be the light of the worl if they ever expect to find the light of truth, or be benefitted by

"Whatsoever doth make manifest, is light."¶ All sin is th work of darkness, and while it remains in darkness, it is conceale but when it is brought to the light, it then appears as it is. An the only way for sinners to bring their evil deeds to the light, is reveal them, by confession, to those who are declared to be th light of the world. Here they must be uncovered and brought the light: for a thousand confessions made in secret, (in the dark will never bring one sin to the light; and if the evil deeds of si ners are not brought to the light, they never can be put awa Therefore he who is not willing to confess his sins to the followe of Christ, who are the light of the world, need never expect to g rid of them, nor find the forgiveness of God. In this manner th came to the light in Christ's first appearing. In the beginni they came to John; "confessing their sins."** In the apostl days, "Many that believed came, and confessed, and showed the deeds."††

Again: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to fo give us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."‡‡ man is required of God to confess his sins in secret only, or acknowledge himself a sinner, without bringing his evil deeds the light, we would ask, why are not those who practice this ma ner of confession, cleansed from all unrighteousness? Is God unfai

* Prov. xxviii. 13. † Mark i. 4. & Luke iii 3. ‡ Luke xii. 2. || Matt v. 14.
¶ Eph. v 13. ** Matt. iii. 6. †† Acts xix. 18. ‡‡ 1 John i. 9.

l to his promise? or did the apostle declare a lie? No one will etend to answer these questions in the affirmative. What then is e matter? "All unrighteousness is sin," as the same apostle de-ires.* But they go on, continually confessing in the same man-r, and are as continually committing sin, according to their con-ssions. Hence they are witnesses against themselves, that they e still unrighteous; therefore it is evident that they do not con-ss their sins to God's acceptance; and this is the true and only ason why they do not receive the promise.

9. No truth is more clearly established in the sacred writings an this; that God always had his witnesses, who acted as agents tween God and man; sometimes to plead the cause of man be-re God, as mediators; and sometimes to communicate the will God to man, as messengers. And it is equally true that God ways required man to receive these witnesses in his name, and render implicit obedience to them; nor could mankind ever find ceptance with God in any other way. The testimonies of Jesus hrist are very plain on this subject: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me."† And again: Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."‡ Since then, we are re-ired to receive Christ through his witnesses, or those whom he nds, and since what we do to them, we do to him, it necessarily llows that, if we confess our sins to them, or in their presence, his witnesses, we really do it to Christ; nor can we be accepted ort of this.

We readily admit that no man, of himself, hath power to forgive ; that power must proceed from God. The forgiveness of sin, ter confession, must be wrought by the operation of the Spirit of od. But the promise of God is sure; and, "the Son of man hath wer on earth to forgive sins."|| Therefore, if the sinner, on his rt, is honest and faithful in his confession, he can have no cause distrust the mercy of God, and he soon finds the proof of it in s own soul, by a sensible manifestation of that invisible power hich removes every feeling of condemnation which he before felt, d fills his soul with comfort and peace. And this power is an ident proof to him that his confession is acceptable to God.

But it is proper to remark here, that this power must necessarily me through some medium, either through the witness to whom e confession was made, or some other person who had before re-ived it, and who, by his spiritual travel, stands in a nearer rela-n to God than the sinner can do in that situation. Besides, as fore observed, God always dispenses the power of salvation to an through the agency of man; and therefore the power of for-

* 1 John v. 17. † John xiii. 20. & Matt. x. 40. ‡ Matt. xxv. 40. || Mark ii. 10.

giveness which souls receive from God, must come through th witnesses or servants of God, who stand in that lot, as agents mediators between God and man. The sinner may indeed recei a reflection of divine light, which may give him some view of h situation, and produce conviction of sin; and it may point him the true light, and thus enable him to come to it. But as certain as he comes to the true light, he must make manifest his evil deed and he never can receive the abiding treasures of salvation in an other way.

Certain it is that man, in his fallen state, can never come in mediately to God; but whatever he receives from God, of a spir ual nature, must either come to him through ministering spirits, be communicated through living witnesses on earth. Therefo tho a person under the powerful conviction of sin, not knowi the true order of God for the confession and forgiveness of si may cry to God for deliverance, and may have his burden of co demnation removed or suspended, for a time, by the operation some ministering spirit, and feel his soul comforted for a seaso yet, as the treasures of the gospel, for fallen man, are committ to "earthen vessels," and as "the Son of man hath placed pow on earth to forgive sins;" therefore sin cannot finally be taken aw from any soul, without a confession in the order of God's appoi ment, to his living witnesses. This doctrine may appear new a strange to many of our readers; but it is agreeable to the testimo of ETERNAL TRUTH.

Jesus Christ, after his resurrection, appeared to his disciple and said, "Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, ev "so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed "them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Wh "soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whos "ever sins ye retain, they are retained."* Thus he commission them to preach the gospel of peace, and gave them power to rem and retain sins. But this power was contained in the Holy Spi which they received. And thus the apostles and elders of t church all had that power committed to them; and so it is in t day.

Without this Divine power, neither the apostles nor any oth could ever remit or retain the sins of those who came to make co fession: hence they were dependent upon the will of God, ma fested in this Holy Spirit which they had received; and therefo in all their ministrations, they were directed by the gift of Go This is agreeable to the testimony of Jesus; "I do nothing of m "self; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things. "He that believeth on me, the works that I do, shall he do also.

* John xx. 21, 22, 23.

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that "the Father may be glorified in the Son."*

So it is in the present day: every leader and elder in the church of Christ, is as much dependent on the gift of God, in all his spiritual ministrations, as a child is dependent on its parents; nor do they ever pretend otherwise. Therefore, tho they are the agents, or *earthen vessels*, (as the apostle expresses it,) to whom this treasure is committed; yet should they attempt to act of themselves, in this holy vocation, without looking to God, and feeling their dependence on his holy Spirit, they would soon lose all their spiritual power, and be as destitute as Sampson was of natural power after his head was shorn.

It appears by the preceding observations, that the law of Moses enjoined the confession of sin to the priests and elders of the people; that the manner and order of confession was plainly pointed out under the law; and that the figures of the law, on this point, evidently alluded to the manner in which it was to be practiced under the gospel. It also appears that the operations of the Spirit of God, in the work of conviction, clearly teaches that confessions ought to be made before the witnesses of God; that reason teaches the propriety and consistency of it; that Jesus Christ taught it; and that it was practiced under the ministration of John the Baptist, and in the primitive church until the falling away. And this doctrine of auricular confession (as it is called) was well known to the catholic fathers, and was practiced by them; and that it was then, or shortly after, wickedly corrupted in the Catholic church; so that its blessed effects were entirely lost many hundreds of years before the reformation from popery took place.

But man is not required to confess his sins before the wicked; for this would be like bringing darkness to darkness, which would naturally produce an increase of darkness upon the soul. Yet if any one have wronged any of his fellow creatures, he is bound to confess the wrong, and make restitution to the injured person, as far as possible, according to the strict demands of justice; otherwise he can never find a just relation to the work of God. But the true order of confession requires the sinner to come before one or more of the real witnesses of truth, who possess the Spirit of Christ, and there honestly confess, as in the presence of God, the particulars of all his transgressions.

As light makes manifest, and truth reveals the real state of souls, so this doctrine proceeds from the attribute of light in God, and is supported by Divine Truth; and in it is displayed the virtues of humility and honesty. And thus a true principle of light is planted in man, by which souls find forgiveness of their sins and acceptance with God; and this is the only means of introduction into

* John viii. 28 and xiv. 12, 13.

the kingdom of light. Hence this doctrine is revived, and fully established in this day of Christ's second appearing, as the only door of hope for the fallen race of man, and the only entrance into the Kingdom of Christ.

CHAPTER V.

The Resurrection.

THE Resurrection is a doctrine generally believed by all who profess a belief in the christian religion. But what constitutes the real nature and substance of the resurrection, seems to be a subject of dispute among many. The most general and popular belief is that the natural body of man, consisting of flesh and blood and bones, after being divested of the spirit or living soul, and consigned to the grave, will, at a certain future period of time, be raised from the dust of the earth, with which it had been blended by dissolution, and be reanimated with the same living spirit, and arraigned before the judgment seat of Christ, there to be judged and consigned to a state of everlasting happiness or misery. This doctrine is generally believed to accord strictly with the testimony of the scriptures, and therefore supposed to be well founded. To eradicate these long established impressions, and convince mankind that they are erroneous and antichristian, and not taught by divine revelation, is a task of no small magnitude.

"That there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust,"* is a truth which all must acknowledge; for Jesus Christ himself plainly testified it, and also his apostles after him and without it, the hope of the christian is vain, and his faith vain. Jesus Christ testified, saying, "The hour is coming, *and now is* "when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they "that hear shall live." And again; "Marvel not at this: for the "hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves,† shall

* Acts xxiv. 15.

† Μνημείοις i. e. *monuments* or *places of remembrance*. Much stress is laid upon the word *graves*, as evidence that Christ alluded particularly to the natural body; but the original word which is translated *graves* was used by the ancient Greeks to signify *places of remembrance*, called by the Romans *monumenta*, in English *monuments*, which is a more correct translation than *graves*. But if those only who have monuments erected to their memory are to be raised, the number must be very small in proportion to the whole human race; for a vast portion have never even had the honor of being put into *graves*. Jesus evidently used the expression in a figurative sense, to show that the time was approaching in which all the fallen race, in their various places and orders, would be brought to a *remembrance* or *consideration* of their lost state, and of what they had done; and that their past lives, with all their sins would come into remembrance and be clearly laid open to their view; and being

"hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, "unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto "the resurrection of damnation."* Many other passages might be added in proof of the resurrection of the soul; but all this has no reference to the natural body, except as a figure. This will appear evident from the following considerations.

1. Jesus Christ, when on earth, declared himself to be the resurrection: "I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in "me, tho he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth, "and believeth in me, shall never die."† If then, Christ is the resurrection and the life, it necessarily follows, that all who are in Christ, are in the resurrection, whether their bodies be dead or living. And also, if he that believeth in Christ, shall live, tho his body be dead; then it must be the soul to which Christ had reference: for the dead body of a man cannot believe, any more than the dead carcass of any other animal. And again: If by the expression, "Whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die," Christ alluded to the animal body, his promise has certainly failed: for the bodies of all christians do die. Therefore Christ must have had particular reference to the soul, and not to the body.

Hence it is clearly evident that the reanimation of the natural body, after its return to the dust, is not necessary to constitute that kind of resurrection to which Christ alluded. He evidently meant that in him was that spiritual life which constitutes the true resurrection; and that those who believe in him, and receive this life, are made partakers of his resurrection: for it is the power of eternal life, dwelling in him, which in truth constitutes the resurrection.

2. The apostle Paul plainly testifies that, "Flesh and blood "cannot inherit the Kingdom of God; neither doth corruption "inherit incorruption."‡ Therefore the natural body, which is composed of flesh and blood, and returns to corruption, can never be admitted into Heaven, even upon the supposition that it could be raised from the dust and be reanimated. Of course it must either remain upon the earth or go to hell; and therefore its resurrection can be of no benefit to the believer, seeing that, according to the apostle's doctrine, it must necessarily be excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven. "Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." The natural body of man is corruptible. If then, as some say, it is to be so transformed as to become incorruptible, then cor-

waked up to a sense of feeling, by the sound of the everlasting gospel, which is the voice of the Son of God, they would either come to the resurrection of life, by honestly confessing their sins, and obeying the gospel; or to the resurrection of damnation, by obstinately refusing to comply with the calls of the gospel; as many are now doing, contrary to their own light and conviction.

* John v. 25, 28, 29. † John xi. 25, 26. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 50.

ruption must inherit incorruption; which is contrary to the apostle's express declaration.

But (says the objector) the same apostle testifies, in the same chapter that, "The dead shall be raised incorruptible." Very true; but what dead? Surely the apostle could not mean the dead bodies of men and women: for these are made up of flesh and blood, and have returned to corruption; and certainly he would not contradict himself, and that in the same chapter too. The apostle here alluded to dead souls, those who were dead in trespasses and sins. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." The sound of the gospel trumpet wakes up souls who are dead in the works of Adam, and raises them to the life of Christ; and thus they come into the resurrection, according to the testimony of Christ to Martha; "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, tho he were dead, yet shall he live."

But the apostle says, "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." This is also true; but in what sense? It is impossible for corruption itself to put on incorruption; and it is equally impossible for mortality to put on immortality. Such a transformation can no more take place than sin can be transformed into holiness. Yet a soul lost in a corrupt nature, and clothed with a corruptible body, may put on incorruption. But then all that corruptible stuff which it possesses, whether of body or spirit, must be put off: for corruption and incorruption can never dwell together. So also a soul who possesses a mortal body, may put on immortality; but that immortality can never render the body immortal. Nor can any soul be completely happy in its immortality, until it is divested of its mortal body, and of every thing else which is either mortal or corruptible. When this takes place, then "Death is swallowed up in victory."

Some have attempted to support the absurd notion, that the natural body is to be transformed into a spiritual body. But no transformation whatever can ever change matter into spirit. "That "which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the "spirit, is spirit." And tho the living spirit may be enclosed in a body of flesh; yet they cannot be so blended together as to become one in essence. The one is natural, temporal and mortal, and must perish, like all other material substances; and the other, being of a spiritual and eternal substance, must exist forever. But even admitting the supposition, that the natural body could be transformed into a spiritual body, its original materials, being composed of flesh and blood, must necessarily be excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven.

3. It is universally acknowledged that, "God is a Spirit;" that the Almighty Creator and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not possess a natural body of flesh and blood, like mortal man;

and it is also admitted that he is infinitely more great and glorious in all his Divine perfections than any created being whatever; consequently he needs no natural body to complete his glory. It then follows, that the natural body is not necessary to complete the happiness of man: for if man really needs a natural body to complete his happiness, then he must need something more than his Creator possesses, in order to be completely happy, which is a *complete* absurdity.

But if the natural body of man is not necessary to complete his happiness, then why should it be raised again? In its present state, it is considered as a clog to the soul; and if the soul of man is to be clogged with a natural body to the endless ages of eternity, while the angels and ministering spirits have no such clog, how can he ever be made equal to the angels? He must, upon this principle, forever remain inferior, without the most distant hope of ever becoming equal; yet according to the testimony of Jesus Christ, "they are equal unto the angels;" and, "Know ye not," saith the apostle Paul, "that we shall judge angels?"* Thus the doctrine of a natural resurrection appears altogether inconsistent and unreasonable.

4. Every discerning person will doubtless acknowledge that the flesh is a clog to the spirit, or in other words, that the body is a clog to the soul. And tho the body is given as a temporal tabernacle for the soul to act in, and prove its obedience and subjection to the will of God, in a state of humiliation; yet it was intended from the beginning, that the soul should, in due time, be released from it, and enjoy a state of greater freedom than it was capable of enjoying in it. And as the righteous are capable of enjoying more happiness when released from the body, than they can possibly enjoy in it; so the wicked are capable of suffering more misery in a separate state, than they can possibly suffer in the body without destroying the life of the body. Hence a separate state is indispensibly necessary for both the righteous and the wicked that both may be able to feel and sensibly realize the due reward of their deeds. But they never can return again to their earthly tabernacles.

5. The resurrection, in its fulness, is the highest state of glory ever expected by the saints. But according to the doctrine of a carnal resurrection, the highest state of glory to be obtained by the righteous, cannot be realized short of raising up that dead and disorganized matter which once constituted the soul's earthly tabernacle. And if the soul must again be confined in this, and clogged with it, in order to be made perfect in glory, it must be because this dead matter, which was originally composed of the elements of the natural world, is of a nature superior to the soul, which is

* Luke xx. 36. and 1 Cor. vi. 3.

composed of the elements of the spiritual world; how else could it possibly increase the glory of the soul by being reunited with it? For it is obvious that in this case, the body must be first in view, and therefore must forever eclipse the glory of the soul. But this absurd doctrine would, if true, wholly reverse the established order of God's creation, in which the earthly part was formed as a mere temporary shadow, to represent that spiritual and eternal substance, which was to succeed.

6. The work of God in the new creation, is a spiritual work, and not natural. "That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural, and afterward that which is spiritual."* The present world with all that pertains to it, is natural and temporal, being created for time; and as before stated, it is but a shadow or figure of the spiritual world. And tho the shadow or figure of a thing may represent the substance; yet every one knows that it can never be transformed into the substance which it is designed to represent. The picture of a tree can never be transformed into a real tree, nor can the shadow of a man, ever become a living man.

The great object and design of the resurrection is to raise souls out of their natural, fallen and depraved state, into a spiritual and heavenly state; it must therefore be a spiritual, and not a natural work. To suppose it a natural work, designed to operate upon natural bodies, so as to transform them from sordid dust to a heavenly and eternal state of existence, is to render the spiritual creation of God subservient to natural and material substances, and dependent on such for its accomplishment; or else it must suppose the natural to be superior to the spiritual. In either case, it must also suppose the natural bodies of men to be eternal, as well as their souls, since they are to be raised up and eternally reunited to the soul. Such absurdities are too glaring to obtain the credit of any enlightened soul.

But (replies the objector) it is to be raised a spiritual body, as saith the apostle; "It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." Very good; this is agreeable to our faith; this point once granted, and the dispute is at an end. But if it is to be raised a spiritual body, it cannot be made up of the materials which compose the natural body; for it would then be a natural body still and must be seen by the natural eye; whereas a spiritual body cannot be discerned by the natural eye. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."† Yet when the natural man hears of the resurrection he readily applies it to the reanimation of the animal body, fully believing that to be its true meaning. But if his ideas of it are correct

* 1 Cor. xv. 46. † 1 Cor. ii. 14.

hen he receives and understands the highest spiritual work of God hat will ever be revealed on earth, by the gospel. If this be so, t entirely falsifies the apostle's declaration. As the new creation of God, in the spiritual world, with all that pertains to it, is spiri-ual, and not natural; so nothing which is natural can be admitted nto it. Therefore the natural body of man, with all those mate-ials of which it is composed, must be forever excluded from it.

7. The apostle Paul, in his speech before king Agrippa, ex-presses himself as follows: "Having therefore obtained help of 'God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, 'saying none other things than those which the prophets and Mo-'ses did say should come; that Christ should suffer, and that he 'should be the *first* that should rise from the dead, and should shew 'light unto the people, and to the Gentiles."*

If then, by the rising from the dead, we are to understand the reanimation of the natural body, Christ was not the *first* who rose: for, according to the testimony of the scriptures, there had been no ess than six dead bodies reanimated and raised up, before Christ rose, three of which he himself had raised. Perhaps it will be said, hat he was the first who rose in that extraordinary manner.† Let his be granted; but if it be still contended that his natural body was reanimated, and that this was his real resurrection to which the apostle had reference, let the manner be never so extraordinary, his does not alter the case; it was not the *first* dead body that had been raised, and of course, not consistent with the testimony of the apostle. Hence the apostle must have had reference to a spiritual resurrection, or Christ could not have been the first that rose from he dead.

The resurrection of the natural body of man, is strongly argued from the supposed resurrection of the natural body of Jesus Christ, which is thought to be established beyond dispute, by the fact that t was not found in the sepulcher where it was laid, and by several particular circumstances connected with his appearance to his dis-

* Acts xxvi 22, 23. See also 1 Cor xv. 20. Col i. 18. & Rev. i 5

† The resurrection of Jesus Christ was indeed more extraordinary than the natural man an have any conception of; because it was a spiritual resurrection, the first and the great-st that ever did or ever can take place on earth. But if it had been nothing more than the eanimation or rising of his earthly tabernacle or natural body, it could not have been so xtraordinary as that of Lazarus, who rose in open sight of many of the Jews, after he had een in the grave four days, and was seen personally alive, probably by thousands who were pen enemies; whereas Jesus could not have been dead much over thirty six hours, having xpired about the ninth hour, which, according to our computation, was 3 o'clock in the fternoon, on the 6th. day of the week, and rose very early on the morning of the first, which was the 3d day after his crucifixion,) probably before 4 o'clock; for the women ere at the sepulcher very early, "when it was yet dark," and the sun, at that season of he year, must have risen before six, (it being in April,) and the day must then have dawned oon after 4 o'clock. Besides, no one saw him rise, nor do we learn that any one saw him fter he had risen, except his own disciples, and those that believed on him. But even if e had been seen to roll away the stone himself, and come out alive, in the open view of as any people as saw Lazarus rise, taking all circumstances into consideration, it could not ave been so wonderful to the natural man as the resurrection of Lazarus, who had been in he grave four days.

ciples after his resurrection; such as the following; "And the
"came and held him by the feet and worshipped him.—Behol
"my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see
"for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. An
"when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and h
"feet.—And after eight days, again his disciples were within, an
"Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, an
"stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith h
"to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; an
"reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be no
"faithless, but believing."*

These passages have been carefully examined and fully answe
ed by Br. John Dunlavy, of Kentucky,† and therefore it is less ne
cessary to enlarge upon the subject here. But it may not be in
proper to make a few remarks for the reader's consideration.

1. It is readily granted that the natural body of Jesus was raise
from the sepulcher and taken away. This was necessary, no
only for the conviction of his disciples who, before they receive
the Holy Ghost, were but natural men, and had not themselve
received any understanding of the true nature of the resurrectio
but also for the conviction of others who might afterwards recei
their testimony; that the disciples, after being convinced themselve
might be able to convince a lost world, whose carnal sense an
understandings rendered it very difficult for them to believe spi
tual truths, unless they were confirmed by circumstantial evidenc
which they could not overthrow. For, as their ideas of a resurre
tion were natural, it would have been very difficult to persua
them that Christ had risen from the dead, in any manner, so lo
as they could see his dead body still lying in the sepulcher.

2. His appearing to his disciples in the manner he did, an
showing his hands and his feet, and his wounded side, his eati
before them, and speaking to them as he did, were circumstanc
evidently designed to calm their fears and make them conversibl
that he might be able, in a free and familiar manner, to gain the
faith and confidence, and enlighten their understandings, by d
grees, concerning the nature of that spiritual work into which the
were soon to enter, and which they were not able to understand
their then present situation. Hence it was necessary that the ide
of a natural resurrection should first be represented to their mind
as a figure of the spiritual, before the real nature of the spiritu
could be received. It was doubtless for the same cause that Laz
rus, and others were raised again to natural life; namely, to sho
forth by these natural figures, the certainty of a future resurrectio

*Matt. xxviii 9. Luke xxiv. 39, 40. John xx 26, 27.
†See Dunlavy's Manifesto, printed at Pleasant Hill, in Kentucky, 1818.

ut that it was to be a spiritual resurrection, could be revealed only
y the Spirit.

It may be objected that, if it was not the natural body of Jesus
hrist which appeared, he must have deceived his disciples, by
ersuading them that it was in reality his natural body, and not
is Spirit, while in fact there was no natural body there. This
oes not follow: his appearing to them in different characters, as
at of a gardner, a stranger, and the like, is liable to the same ob-
ctions. He could not deceive them by talking with them con-
erning his natural body, which was but the figure of himself, and
e only medium by which he could represent to them the reality
f his resurrection, while they were altogether unable to compre-
end the substance. Had he endeavored to persuade them that
ere was no substance in the case, that it was all a figure, he would
ave deceived them; but this he did not do. He gave them as
uch light as they, at that time, were able to receive, and convey-
l it in a manner the best adapted to their understandings; and
hat could he do more?

His expression, "A spirit hath not flesh and bones as *ye see* me
ave," is no evidence that he then really possessed a body of flesh
nd bones, any more than his appearing to John as a "Lamb, hav-
g seven horns and seven eyes," was a proof that he was *in reality*
ch a creature. The truth is, he appeared to his disciples in the
atural form and figure which he had when with them, as a man
aving flesh and bones, and not as a glorified spirit; and this is
e true import of his words in the original.

3. Jesus testified to Nicodemus, saying, "No man hath ascend-
ed up to Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even
the Son of man who is in Heaven."* Hence it is evident that,
the natural body of Jesus never came down from Heaven, but
as "made of a woman," it could not be that which ascended up
Heaven. "That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that
hich is born of the Spirit, is spirit." And according to the tes-
mony of the apostle Paul, before cited, "Flesh and blood cannot
herit the Kingdom of God." None will pretend to deny that
e natural body of Jesus was made of flesh and blood, like that of
y other man; therefore his natural body could not enter and
herit the Kingdom of God in Heaven.

But even admitting that it was indeed the natural body of Jesus,
e same that was crucified and pierced with a spear, which ap-
ared to his disciples, we would ask, Why were the wounds still
t in the body? Was not God who raised him from the dead, able
heal his wounds? Or was it necessary that he should forever
ar in his body the marks of Jewish barbarity? If so, how can it
er be a glorious body, as it is called? Besides, if Christ's body

* John iii. 13.

is to be forever disfigured with the cruel wounds inflicted on it b his persecutors, then the bodies of his faithful martyrs, who hav suffered all manner of abuse on their bodies, for his sake, must r main in the same condition, or they cannot be like their maste and if this is to be the case, what a grotesque figure must they mak in Heaven!

4. It must appear quite inconsistent with the established law of living animal bodies to be capable of transformation, so as appear, at will, in different forms, and to pass through materi substances without making any breach, and to vanish instant from the natural sight. This power is generally believed to b peculiar to spiritual bodies only. Yet it is evident that Jesus Chri not only appeared to his disciples in a variety of characters, suc as a gardner, a travelling stranger, an unbodied spirit, in his nat ral appearance when with them, and with his wounded side a other marks of his crucifixion; but he also appeared suddenly the midst of them, while the doors were shut, and as suddenly va ished from their sight. He also appeared to John as "a Lam having seven horns and seven eyes."* All these different appea ances are evidently far more consistent with the doctrine of a spi tual body, than with that of a natural one, and afford a conclusi evidence that there was no natural body there.

5. The declaration of the Almighty to Adam, concerning t forbidden fruit, was positive: "In the day that thou eatest there thou shalt surely die." All must admit that this death was spiritu and not natural; for, according to the record, Adam lived to t advanced age of nine hundred and thirty years. And it will doub less be admitted also, that Christ is the resurrection, according his own testimony; and that he came to redeem man from t death of the fall, from that death which he suffered by transgr sion; to raise him from a death of sin to a life of righteousnes hence this resurrection must of necessity be spiritual, and not na ral. What authority then have we to believe that the natu body of man will ever have any share in this resurrection?

We have the authority of Job, replies an objector. Job sa "Tho after my skin worms destroy this body, yet *in my fle* "shall I see God."† But it is well known that this translation disputed by those who are acquainted with the Hebrew origin They say the particle there translated *in* is more properly render *out of* or *from*. And we find in the margin of some of our la Bibles, that the whole verse is thus translated; "After I sh "awake, tho this body be destroyed, yet *out of my flesh* sha "see God." The translators of the Bible doubtless had the sa ideas of a carnal resurrection which so generally prevail at the p sent day; and therefore it was natural for them to translate t

* Rev. v. 6. † Job xix. 26.

assage according to their own belief and understanding, in prefer-nce to giving it a different sense, especially as the words were usceptible of different constructions, and the real meaning might ave appeared dubious to them.

6. The established order and progressive growth, maturity, ecay and dissolution of all things in the natural creation, is a con-nual and striking proof that nothing which becomes old and de-ays or dies, can ever revive and be renewed again. Altho the ld creation, with all its established order, is to be superseded by ie new; yet God never designed that the order of the new should e established on principles contrary to the established order of ie old; because this would at once defeat the object and design f the old, which was to be a figurative representation of the new, nd from the spiritual substance of the old, the new was to rise. ut if the old natural body is to be raised up again from the dust, nd established in its original form, in the new creation, it must e on principles directly contrary to the established order of the ld creation, and must therefore defeat its original design. This ould render God's plans inconsistent with each other, which annot be; because God is a consistent Being, and all his plans re perfectly consistent with each other.

Let us suppose, for instance, that instead of raising up a new ak from an acorn, which is the natural seed of the old, God should ise up the old oak, which had fallen down and rotted, and min-led with the dust of the earth, and should establish it again a liv-ng tree; would not such a resurrection of the old be directly con-rary to the original order and laws of nature? And would such a anner of operation bear the least shadow of comparison with any f the works of God? Yet a new and beautiful oak may be raised om the seed or acorn, which is the only living remains of the old; nd it may also be formed, by the hand of cultivation, into a far ore beautiful tree than the old; and be fitted and prepared for a ore exalted station than the old tree ever had, or ever could have, ithout the same care and operation. The same observations ill apply to any other tree or plant whatever, as well as to many her things: for the whole of the old creation, in its natural state, filled with figurative representations of things in the new and piritual creation of God.

Altho the language of the apostle Paul is very clear and explicit n this subject, yet it seems that the generality of professing chris-ans are so far prepossessed in favor of a reanimation of the same aterial body, that they really suppose the apostle is supporting at principle, when in truth he is arguing against it. "Thou west not that body that shall be." It is generally, but errone-usly supposed that the apostle here had reference to the burial of dead corpse in the grave; but even admitting that to be his mean-

ing, it seems strange that any one should imagine that the apos meant to say the same body should rise again, when his words plainly imply the contrary. "Thou sowest *not* that body that sh be." Had he omitted the negative adverb *not*, and said, "Th sowest that body that shall be," we might then suppose that, in t expression, he advocated the resurrection of the same body; then he must have contradicted himself; because in other parts the chapter he talks very differently.

But the truth is, the apostle, in this expression, had particu reference to the act of depositing seed in the earth, as a figure show the nature of the resurrection. For as it is with seed whi is put into the ground, having a principle of life in itself, and bei quickened by the power of vegetation, the body of it dies and r in the earth, before a new body of the same species can rise fr it, and come to maturity; so it is with the natural man when so in the gospel field, his spirit must be quickened by the renovati power of Christ, and all that belongs to that earthly nature in whi he was born and brought up, must die in him; and the soul m be renewed and grow up into the heavenly nature of Christ, w is the resurrection and the life. When it is thus raised, it is fit the Kingdom of Heaven, but not before.

Again: "Some will say, How are the dead raised up, and w "what body do they come? Thou fool, that which thou sowest "not quickened except it die." If we are to understand by t sowing, the act of putting the dead body into the grave, as so suppose, then we must also understand that *the dead body d after it is put into the grave*, which is a most glaring absurdi But if this be not granted, then the dead body can have no part the resurrection: "for that which thou sowest is not quicken except it die."

"It is sown a natural body." The apostle, in this expressi evidently alluded to the sowing of the seed of man, which produ a mortal being, in which is a spiritual substance clothed wit mortal body, composed of the elements of this world, and i fallen, depraved, corrupted and feeble state, subject to death a exposed to sin and misery. And this spiritual substance is t which constitutes the real man, which, as the apostle says, "is so "in corruption and raised in incorruption—is sown in dishon "and raised in glory—is sown in weakness, and raised in power "is sown a natural body (that is, *in* a natural body) and raise "spiritual body:" for it is evident, and well understood, that wh the soul is in a fallen state, it is considered and accounted *natur* Its life is natural; and this life must die before it can be raised a heavenly life. Thus it is plain that, "there is a natural bo and there is a spiritual body."

"It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body."

the sowing alludes to the introduction of the natural man into the natural world by generation; so the raising alludes to the rising of the soul into the heavenly world by regeneration, and thus it becomes a spiritual body. Hence it is not the natural, but the spiritual body which is the subject of the resurrection. This may be clearly seen and understood in the close of the apostle's discourse on this subject, where he respectively points out the descent and order of the natural man from the *first Adam*, who was "of the earth, earthy;" and the descent and order of the spiritual man from the *second Adam*, who was "the Lord from Heaven, a quickening spirit."*

"There are celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial," saith the apostle; "but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another." The terrestrial bodies of men and women, like the terrestrial bodies of other animals, are composed of the temporal elements, and are created for time. But the celestial or spiritual bodies of mankind are composed of spiritual elements, and are created for eternity. The true glory of the former consists in their operating in their proper places and order, in doing the work required of them in this terrestrial world; while the true glory of the latter consists in their operating in their proper places and order, in doing the work required of them in the heavenly world.

Thus we may see that the true resurrection consists in the rising of the spiritual part of man *from* the terrestrial elements, into which it has been sown by generation, *to* the celestial. By the operation of the Spirit of Christ, in the work of the regeneration, it is formed into a celestial and heavenly body, endowed with immortality and eternal life, and thus it becomes an everlasting inhabitant of the celestial world; and thus it is that, "this corruptible puts on incorruption, and this mortal puts on immortality." This glorious work of the resurrection has commenced, and will continue with increasing power and progress, until all souls shall have experienced its effects, either by coming forth to the resurrection of life, or to the resurrection of damnation.

CHAPTER VI.

The Day of Judgment.

THE Day of Judgment is inseparably connected with the Resurrection; and tho the belief in both is probably as extensive and universal as the profession of the christian religion; yet mankind appear to be as much in the dark with respect to the former as the latter. But that "God hath appointed a day in which he will

* See 1 Cor. xv. 45. &c.

judge the world in righteousness," and render impartial justice to every rational soul, is a truth which cannot reasonably be disputed. Such a judgment was frequently alluded to, by the patriarchs and prophets, from the earliest ages of the world; and was afterwards more fully declared and confirmed by our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles. Indeed such a judgment is indispensably necessary from the very nature of righteousness and justice in God.

But what is this day of judgment? and in what manner is it to be brought about? These are questions of no small concern to mankind, and especially to those who profess the christian religion. Many who call themselves christians, are firm and confident in the belief, that the day of judgment is a certain appointed day, yet future, in which the whole creation will be put in the most terrible commotion; when the Lord Jesus Christ will suddenly descend from beyond the starry regions, and personally appear in the natural elements of clouds and flaming fire, surrounded with myriads of saints and angels, and with a voice surpassing ten thousand thunders, will call up all the dead bodies of Adam's race from their graves, and their souls from the eternal world, and cause them to appear, soul and body, in full form and stature, and in all their former life and sensation, before his awful throne in the skies, there to receive their final and irrevocable sentence of salvation or damnation.

But we would ask, how these ideas of the day of judgment can be reconciled with the opinion generally entertained, by these same sort of christians, that the final and everlasting fate of the soul is decided at the hour of death? If the soul of a man or woman who falls a victim to the grim messenger of death, is thenceforth immediately adjudged and consigned to eternal happiness or misery without the possibility of a reversal, why should it be called up again to receive a second sentence, which, upon these principles must necessarily be the same as the former? If the day of probation ends at death, and the fate of the soul is then unalterably fixed according to the opinion of these christians, what can be the object of a day of judgment of the preceding description? Such a resurrection would undoubtedly afford a miraculous display of power to the view of the natural man; but if those who were thus raised from the dead had already received their final sentence, what advantage is to be derived from such a day of judgment? The resurrection may be needful to answer their plan; but of what use is the judgment, since their fate is already decided?

But we view the day of judgment in a very different light from all this. We view it as a work which has already commenced; a work which we ourselves have seen and felt, and can therefore testify from our own experience, that it is a work which, tho unseen by the natural man, is real and substantial; and tho gradual

and progressive in its operations, it is certain and effectual; and will continue to increase in power, till a full and final separation shall be made between good and evil. This work will be accomplished, both by the order and course of God's providence, and by the operations of the Spirit of Christ in his chosen witnesses, agreeable to ancient prediction: "Behold, the Lord cometh in ten thou-"sands of his saints,* to execute judgment upon all, and to con-"vince all that are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds "which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard "speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him."†

Here is a true description of the work of the judgment day. First, to separate between the principles of good and evil, and to convince souls of their ungodliness; and secondly, to render impartial justice to all souls, according to their works, after giving them a free and fair choice between good and evil. The same work is also alluded to, in the visions of the prophet Daniel. "The "kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under "the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of "the Most High;" and "the judgment was set, and the books "were opened."‡

That the saints are to judge the world, is a doctrine which was taught in the primitive church. Thus saith Paul to the Corinthians; "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?"‖ And again; "Some men's sins are opened beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after." Hence it is evident that all sin must be brought to judgment; and this work of judgment commences by bringing souls to an honest confession of their sins. Here a door is set open, and a free offer is made for all souls to enter in, and bring their sins to judgment by confession. And those who honestly do this, will have their sins separated from them by the spirit of judgment, and the purifying fire of the gospel: and thus the soul will be justified. But those who refuse to come to this equitable and righteous judgment of Christ, their sins will follow after them to the judgment of condemnation. "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."¶ That is; if we try ourselves by the righteous judgment of God, and condemn all evil, and separate ourselves from it, and cleave only to that which is good, we shall not be judged to condemnation. But if we do not judge ourselves in this manner, we shall be judged unworthy of any portion with the righteous.

This Day of Judgment has now commenced, and God has begun to judge the nations of the earth, who have long been erring in judgment, and straying from the paths of justice and truth; and

* "*In myriads* of his saints," according to the original: the Greek proposition ἐν signifies *in*, and ought to be so translated.
† Jude 14, 15. ‡ Dan. vii. 10 & 27. ‖ 1 Cor. vi. 2. ¶ 1 Cor. xi. 31.

this righteous judgment will never cease until the work of God shall be fully accomplished. It will prove efficacious in its operations, and will be made manifest in the conviction of evil of every description, and in the full developement of error of every kind, whether in judgment, opinion or practice. It will produce in the willing and obedient, the effectual destruction of all kinds of vice and immorality, and every principle of evil. It will enlighten mankind in the knowledge of the truth, and widely extend the benign principles of peace and good-will to man. It will greatly increase the practical duties of humanity, benevolence and charity, and produce a universal diffusion of divine light, and the knowledge of salvation; and in the end, it will effect the final decision and termination of the probationary state of all souls.

This Day of Judgment will be gradual and progressive, but certain and effectual; and it will continue till a full and final separation shall be made between good and evil. Then shall the righteous no longer suffer under the oppressive hands of the wicked; nor shall the wicked any more shelter himself under the banners of the righteous; but each shall reap the reward of his own doings, whether they be good or evil: for God will search the heart and try the reins of every creature. Then shall the covering be taken off from all people, and the veil be removed from all faces. Then shall Antichrist no longer beguile mankind with the mere name of religion in which there is no reality; nor his ministers any more deceive souls with the hope of salvation in their sins. Fraud and violence, theft and robbery, pride and ambition, malice and envy, falsehood and deception, and every species of wickedness will be completely uncovered, and appear in all their naked deformity; nor will it be in the power of man to conceal the smallest crime: for every secret sin will be brought fully to view. Then shall be accomplished the testimony of the Lord Jesus; "There is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; neither hid that shall not be known."*

All these things will be effectually accomplished by the unerring Judgment of God. The judgment is already set, and the books are opening, and all flesh shall be judged according to the deeds done in the body. The book of life will be displayed, in due time, before the face of every human being, and every secret action will be brought to light, and it will be seen and known what kind of lives all have lived. Good and evil will then be made manifest to all, and in all; and that which was long ago spoken by the prophet Malachi, will then be clearly known and understood: "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand "when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's "soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he

* Luke xii. 2.

shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."* Then shall righteousness reign triumphant over iniquity, "and all shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest."

This work having already commenced, will continue its progressive influence till all souls shall have seen and felt its purifying effects; or, through wilful disobedience shall have rejected their day of trial, because of the cross, and numbered themselves with the impenitent and rebellious, as vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. But this day of judgment is yet in its beginning; it is yet like the little stone, spoken of by the prophet Daniel, and which pointed to this very work. It will yet grow and increase till it shall break in pieces the mighty image; the pride of human nature, and the power of Antichrist shall fall before it, and become "like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors," and be driven away with the wind; while the little unseen, tho powerful agent, shall increase and grow, till, like a mountain of righteousness, it shall fill the whole earth.†

This work, tho powerful and effective in its operations, will at the same time, be so apparently slow in its progress, and so much out of sight of the natural man, that those who, through impenitence and hardness of heart, chuse to put far away the evil day, will be so blinded by wilful unbelief, that they will not be aware of the danger to which they are exposed, until, like the inhabitants of the old world, they shall be finally overwhelmed in the deluge of destruction which it will occasion. "Then shall no man be able to save him that is destroyed, nor to oppress him that hath gotten the victory." The final and everlasting state of all souls will then be decided, not by the stroke of death, but by the unerring judgment of God. "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father." They shall increase from glory to glory, and from one degree of perfection to another, through eternal ages.

But alas! what will become of the wicked? The Judge of the living and the dead hath decided the question: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, prepared for the devil and his angels; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." A solemn and awful consideration!

How vain and inconsiderate are the pursuits of the great mass of mankind! How little do the generality of people consider their awful responsibility to their Creator! Regardless of eternal realities, their whole attention seems to be engrossed with the things that belong to the short span of human life, as tho they were to live forever in this world. The Day of Judgment they put far away from their thoughts, as a matter of no concern, little consid-

* Mal. iii. 2, 3. † Dan. ii. 34, 35.

ering that they are continually increasing the black catalogue
their sins, for which they must finally be brought into judgmen

Many flatter themselves that repentance and conversion, a
cording to the general understanding of the terms, will some tim
or other, release them from any further trouble or responsibili
for their sins, and then all will be well. Relying on this vain hop
this delusive snare of the devil, they willingly deceive themselv
till death unexpectedly closes the scene upon them. Such peop
ought to consider that the infinite difference between Heaven an
hell, does not depend on the small change generally occasioned l
what is commonly called conviction and conversion, where the
is no radical change of life and pursuit in the creature. The a
important decision between eternal happiness and endless miser
is not weighed in such a slender balance; nor is it settled on su
easy conditions.

Souls who are thus deceiving themselves, ought to rememb
and consider well this unalterable decree of the Almighty; "T
soul that sinneth, it shall die." And let them know of a certaint
that this death the sinner cannot escape; and remember that eve
repeated act of sin is still increasing the power of this death up
them; still separating them at a greater distance from God, a
plunging them still deeper into the gulf of spiritual darkness a
loss. And every soul that ever rises from that death, must ri
through sufferings, and in perfect subjection and obedience to t
cross. If mankind would but seriously reflect that the more s
they commit, the deeper they sink from God, and the heavier mu
be their judgment, and the greater their sufferings to rise from th
lost state and gain their redemption, they would dread sin as t
greatest plague that could possibly come upon them. Therefo
let no one who knowingly and willingly commits sin, ever flat
himself with the vain hope that he can escape the righteous juc
ment of God against sin, and let all be assured "that the unrig
eous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God."

Let all lay aside the false doctrines of Antichrist, and consid
and rightly appreciate this important truth; That man is a fr
agent, capable of thinking, believing and acting for himself; a
therefore he is accountable to God for the use and improvement
makes of his free agency, and must be judged and rewarded
cording to his works. The important period is fast approachi
when the dividing line must be fully drawn, when the decisive se
tence must be pronounced; "He that is unjust, let him be unj
"still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he tha
"righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let h
"be holy still. And behold I come quickly; and my reward
"with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

CHAPTER VII.

A few Remarks concerning the true nature of Perfection.

MANY controversies have been excited and maintained among the professors of christianity, concerning the doctrine of christian perfection; and modern professors of religion have most generally rejected the doctrine as unreasonable and unscriptural. Hence nothing seems to excite contempt and opposition sooner than to talk of attaining to a state of perfection in this life. This opposition evidently proceeds from two causes; first, a wrong conception of the true nature of perfection; and second, the impossibility of attaining to it while living in any known sin, as has been fully proved by the general experience of professed christians. And indeed, if it be impossible to live without sin, as many suppose, then surely it must be impossible to be perfect christians.

But those who profess to believe the Bible to be the word of God, ought to acknowledge the testimony of Jesus Christ which is contained in the Bible; for surely *that* cannot be *unscriptural*. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect."* Would Christ require any thing impossible or unreasonable of his people? Certainly not. Then perfection must be attainable; for Christ does positively require it.

The doctrine so frequently taught, and so extensively believed among mankind; "That no one can be perfect in this life," originated in the dark kingdom of Antichrist, and is admirably calculated to ease the conscience, and encourage slothfulness and indifference in the duties of religion: for who will seek after that which he believes to be unattainable? But a little attention to this subject will show the inconsistency of such a belief.

1. God who is infinite in righteousness and goodness, can never require impossibilities of any of his creatures. If then, perfection were not attainable in this life, God never would require it. Yet he does require it. He required it of Abraham: "Walk before me, and be thou perfect."† He required it of the Israelites under the law: "Ye shall be holy; for I am holy."‡ Perfection is therefore attainable.

2. It has been attained. God declared Job to be "*a perfect and upright man.*"|| Noah was also declared to be "a just man, and *perfect* in his generations."¶ The apostle Paul saith, "We speak wisdom to them that are *perfect*." And again; "Let as many as be *perfect*, be thus minded."** Hence it is evident that there were those in his day, who were perfect, according to the work of that day. Perfection has therefore been attained in this life.

* Matt. v. 48. † Gen. xvii. 1. ‡ Lev. xi. 44. and xix. 1.
|| Job. i. 3. and ii. 3. ¶ Gen. vi. 9. ** 1 Cor. ii. 6. and Phil. iii. 15.

3. Any thing may, with strict propriety, be called *perfect*, which perfectly answers the purpose for which it was designed. A circle may be called *a perfect circle*, when it is perfectly round; an apple may be called *perfect*, when it is perfectly sound, having no defect in it; and so of a thousand other things. A child who is perfectly obedient to all the requirements of its parents, is, in that respect, a truly perfect child: for what more can justly be required of it? Yet that same child, when grown to manhood, would be capable of doing much more than he could do in his childhood; and of course, more would be required of him. So when a man comes up to all the requirements of God, he then stands perfectly justified in the sight of God, and is, in that sense, *a perfect man*, and walks before God with a perfect heart. Hence we may see that perfection, in this sense, (which is all that can be required,) instead of being unattainable, is perfectly easy.

The idea which most people have of perfection, is a state in which there can be no increase for the better. This is a mistaken idea: such a state never will be attained, neither in time nor eternity: for the very life of all things which have life, whether vegetable, animal or spiritual, consists in an increasing growth of some kind or other. Stop that increase or growth in any thing, and its life will immediately begin to decay, and it must at length die. So it is with the soul of every true christian; if the increase and growth of the soul in the knowledge and nature of Godliness, ceases, its spiritual life must begin to decrease and die. Therefore, tho' a soul in the progress of faithful obedience to the increasing light and work of God, may become divested of all sinful desires and propensities; yet his life and happiness must and will consist in a further and progressive growth in the knowledge and nature of God, to the endless ages of eternity. And yet a soul who is perfectly obedient to the revealed will of God, is equally perfect before God, in every step of his travel, according to his capacity and God's requirement.

Thus the real nature of perfection, when applied to a christian life, consists in nothing more nor less than in doing what God requires of us, which is to improve all our faculties in doing good according to the best of our understanding and capacity: and in so doing every person who sincerely desires and rightly pursues it, *may attain to perfection.*

THE END.

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